17-5

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,
Princeton, N. J.

BT 97 .A2 D68 1807
Douglas, John, 1721-1807.
The criterion; or Rules by
which the true miracles

THE CRITERION,

&c. &c.

THE CRITERION;

OR

RULES

BY WHICH

THE TRUE MIRACLES

RECORDED IN

The New Testament

ARE DISTINGUISHED

FROM THE SPURIOUS MIRACLES

OF

PAGANS AND PAPISTS.

By JOHN DOUGLAS, D.D.

LORD BISHOP OF SALISBURY.

A NEW EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL AND W. DAVIES, STRAND.

1807.

W. Flint, Printer, Old Bailey.

THE

CRITERION,

&c.

SIR,

MY ſurpriſe has not been greater than my concern to obſerve that a perſon of your good ſenſe, candour, and learning, ſhould have reaſoned himſelf, as you ſay you have done, into an unfavourable opinion of the evidences of Chriſtianity. Ever ſince our laſt converſation on this ſubject, my thoughts have turned principally on your ſcruples, and

on the unreaſonableneſs of them; and the reſult of my reflections you ſhall have in the preſent ſheets. Nor do I think that this addreſs needs any apology. The importance of the ſubject, and my repeated promiſes that I would give you my thoughts concerning it, ſufficiently plead my excuſe. And happy ſhould I eſteem myſelf, if any thing I ſuggeſt, prove a means of bringing you back to that religion which you ſeem to have forſaken, and of ſatisfying you that the reaſons you aſſign for *rejecting* the miracles recorded in the New Teſtament, ought not to weigh with one of your diſcernment.

Unſkilled in controverſy, it may ſeem preſumption in me to offer my opinion on a ſubject, already ſo fully and frequently canvaſſed by the moſt eminent writers; and it may be thought that if *their* arguments have proved ineffectual to ſatisfy your doubts, it will be a vain attempt in *me* to aim at your conviction. But when I conſider the nature of many of your

objections, which are peculiar to yourself, and not borrowed from books; when I reflect, farther, that the controversy, with regard to the credibility of the *Gospel miracles*, has, of late, taken a turn somewhat new, it is obvious, that to refer you to the many excellent defences of Christianity, already in the hands of the public, would be entirely unsatisfactory; for these treatises having been adapted to the prevailing objections of unbelievers, at the particular periods when they were written, it becomes necessary that the Friends of our religion should change their method of defence, since the attack is not carried on in the old way.

You may remember what points you have chiefly insisted upon in our debates on this subject. You granted (as every thinking person must grant) that a power of working miracles, vested in one assuming the character of a *Teacher* from God, would sufficiently establish the truth of his claim; "but you urged, withal, that there

" was no ſolid foundation to believe that
" any ſuch perſon was ever veſted with
" ſuch a power; for that the miracles
" of *Jeſus* and his Apoſtles, related in the
" New Teſtament, were not ſupported by
" ſtronger evidence than were the prodi-
" gies that diſgrace the pages of *Livy*, and
" the Legendary Tales that ſwell the lives of
" the *Romiſh* ſaints. Now theſe latter ac-
" counts are, on all hands, juſtly rejected as
" falſe, but the former, it ſeems, are admitted
" as true: but then, how, you ſay, can we
" fairly diſpute the authenticity of the one,
" and inſiſt ſo much on the credibility of
" the other? For, as the teſtimony in both
" is equally ſtrong, the miracles recorded
" in both the accounts muſt be equally
" credible. That, therefore, you had no
" way of extricating yourſelf out of this
" labyrinth, but by rejecting, at once, all
" miraculous pretenſions whatever."

The whole diſpute ſubſiſting be tween us may be ſtated thus.—The Pro-teſtant Chriſtian thinks himſelf obliged,

from all the principles of reaſon, to believe *that* evidence true which is brought to ſupport the Goſpel miracles; but is at liberty, he thinks, from the ſame principles of reaſon, to doubt or diſbelieve the miracles aſcribed to the *Pagans* of old, or to the *Papiſts* of later times, or, indeed, to any other perſon ſince the publication of the Goſpel. But, herein, you are pleaſed to charge us with a ſtrange and inconſiſtent belief, becauſe, you ſay, the evidence for the truth of the miracles in each caſe, is either the very ſame, or equally ſtrong.

I have not the leaſt heſitation when I pronounce this charge to be groundleſs. And I truſt, that I ſhall be able to convince every candid reader of this treatiſe, addreſſed to you, that baſe metal is not more eaſily detected, when an attempt is made to paſs it for gold, than are the falſe pretenſions of *Paganiſm* and *Popery*, when an attempt is made to put them on the ſame footing of credibility with the miracles of *Jeſus and his apoſtles*.

I moſt readily admit that the credibility of ſuch extraordinary performances, as are miracles, will not be ſufficiently aſcertained, unleſs the accounts of them be authenticated by ſuch a weight of unexceptionable teſtimony, as muſt ſatisfy every candid and capable inquirer after truth.

You cannot, ſurely, refuſe to join iſſue with me here. For, with all your unfavourable notions about miracles, I ſee not how you can require a greater conceſſion than this. And yet, however great it be, I am confident I ſhall not endanger the cauſe for which I am an advocate, by ſetting out with it. For if we can prove (and my deſign in the following pages is to prove) that the evidence brought for the Goſpel miracles, is full as extraordinary as the facts themſelves, and that no juſt ſuſpicion of fraud and falſehood appears in the accounts, while every thing is the reverſe with regard to the evidence brought for the *Pagan* and *Popiſh* miracles, if we can prove this, I ſay, our reaſon will tell us

that we ſafely may, and that we ought indeed, to make a diſtinction, and to believe the former while we reject the latter.

But before we proceed, give me leave to obſerve, that it is in vain to begin this important diſpute, unleſs you are agreed to decide it by the only kind of evidence that can poſſibly be had—namely, by the credit that is due to thoſe who appear as witneſſes, or, in other words, by examining the facts with all the circumſtances of them, and conſidering, at large, the characters, the views, and the conduct of thoſe who reported them.

Writers, on the ſide of infidelity, have very rarely ventured to aſſert the abſolute incredibility of miracles; and their precaution ſeems very prudent. For a miracle being an event brought about in a way contrary to the courſe of nature, and the courſe of nature being the eſtabliſhment of God, every believer of his exiſtence, it ſhould ſeem, muſt admit, that it is

in his power to reverſe it. But this, we know, has been denied by a late very ingenious, but very ſceptical author,* who has not ſcrupled to give us *his* reaſons, why he makes *the impoſſibility and miraculous nature of events*,† ſynonymous, and why he gives his deciſion, *that a miracle ſupported by any human teſtimony, is more properly a ſubject of deriſion than argument.*‡ It may not, therefore, be improper, to take ſome notice of this author's favourite *noſtrum* againſt miracles, which he himſelf is ſo fond of, as to boaſt *that it will with the wiſe and learned, be an everlaſting check to ſuperſtitious deluſions;*§ for to him it ſeems that all miracles are ſuperſtitious deluſions.

* Philoſophical Eſſays concerning Human Underſtanding, by David Hume, Eſq.

† P. 195.—where the author ſpeaking of Abbé Paris's miracles ſays; what have we now to oppoſe to ſuch a cloud of witneſſes but the abſolute impoſſibility or miraculous nature of the events they relate?

‡ P. 194—5. § 174.

"A miracle," ſays he, "is a violation "of the laws of nature, and as a firm and "unalterable experience has eſtabliſhed "theſe laws, the proof againſt a miracle "from the very nature of the fact, is as "entire as any argument from experience "can be poſſibly imagined."*—Now it is obvious, from this quotation, that our author's argument againſt the credibility of miracles, depends entirely upon this, of their being events contrary to firm and unalterable experience. But why an event ſhould be incredible, and incapable of being proved by teſtimony, becauſe it is contrary to our experience, this point, on the certainty of which alone our author's boaſted argument is built, I did not, upon peruſing the *Eſſay on Miracles*, find any attempt made to prove; but upon examining the other eſſays in the collection, it appeared that this point had been the ſubject of two foregoing ones;† and that having eſtabliſhed its truth there, as he ſuppoſed, he thought himſelf warranted

* 180. † The 4th and 5th.

in his ſubſequent *Eſſay on Miracles*, to lay it as the foundation of his reaſoning.

What then is this grand principle of our author's new philoſophy?*—He begins with obſerving, that "all reaſonings concerning matter of fact, ſeem to be founded on the relation of cauſe and effect, and that by means of that relation alone, can we go beyond the evidence of our memory and ſenſes. If you were to aſk a man, ſays he, why he believes any matter of fact which is abſent; for inſtance, that his friend is in the country, or in *France*; he would give you a reaſon, and this reaſon would be ſome other fact; as a letter received from him, or the knowledge of his former reſolutions and promiſes. A man, finding a watch or any other machine in a deſert iſland, would conclude that there had once been men in that iſland. All our reaſonings concerning fact are of the ſame nature: and here it is conſtantly ſup-

* P. 49.

" poſed that there is a connexion betwixt " the preſent fact and that inferred from " it." Thus far his doctrine is unexceptionable; but when he proceeds to enquire how we arrive at the knowledge of cauſes and effects, here we muſt leave him, unleſs we would, with him, contradict firſt principles, and ſtrike at the foundation of all certainty. For he lays it down " as a ge- " neral propoſition, which admits of no " exception, that the knowledge of this " relation of cauſe and effect is not, in any " inſtance, attained by reaſonings, *a priori*, " but ariſes entirely from experience, " when we find that particular objects " are conſtantly conjoined with each " other. Let any object be preſented to " a man of ever ſo ſtrong natural reaſon " and abilities; if that object be entirely " new to him, he will never be able, by " the moſt accurate examination of its ſen- " ſible qualities, to diſcover any of its " cauſes and effects. *Adam*, though his " rational faculties be ſuppoſed, at the " very firſt, ever ſo perfect, could not have

" inferred, from the fluidity and tranſpa-
" rency of water, that it would ſuffocate
" him, or from the light and warmth of
" fire, that it would conſume him. No
" object ever diſcovers, by the qualities
" which appear to the ſenſes, either the
" cauſes which produced it, or the effects
" which will ariſe from it; nor can our
" reaſon, unaſſiſted by experience, ever
" draw any inferences concerning real
" exiſtence and matter of fact."*

It is on the truth of theſe aſſertions that the argument depends, by which our author would prove that miracles are incapable of being made credible by human teſtimony. For thus they ſeem to be connected together. Previous to our own experience, we can diſcover no connexion between cauſe and effect, nor aſſure ourſelves, by reaſoning, *a priori*, that a cauſe has an aptneſs to produce one effect rather than another. From this poſition then it

* P. 50—51.

follows, that unleſs our own experience has connected a cauſe with a particular effect, no teſtimony of witneſſes can induce us to believe that this effect was produced; but miracles being events *contrary to firm and unalterable experience, the proof againſt a miracle, from the very nature of the fact, is as entire as any argument from experience can poſſibly be imagined.*—I have endeavoured, with all the impartiality I am maſter of, to give you a fair repreſentation of this argument; and I hope I have not miſtaken it, though a miſtake here might be very pardonable, conſidering the obſcurity of this writer, owing more to the ſingularity of his matter than to any defect in his ſtyle. I ſhall now endeavour to ſatisfy you, that one who can inſiſt on ſuch points has no pretenſions to be followed as a guide.

For it ſhould ſeem, that the very propoſing of his opinion will, to every one who has not renounced the firſt principles of human knowledge, be a ſufficient con-

futation of it: and though we could not point out any inconſiſtencies or contradictions in the reaſoning by which it is ſupported, yet as it is apparently ſceptical, nay, as the author himſelf tells us it is ſo,* his arguments, for this one reaſon, merit no anſwer, becauſe they can ſcarcely meet with advocates; they may puzzle, but they cannot convince; they may confound, but will never convert the reader. And it is no inconſiderable proof of the weakneſs of a cauſe, when it cannot be defended but by running counter to the general ſenſe of mankind, and contradicting truths looked upon as ſelf-evident.

If no event, however well atteſted, be credible, which contradicts experience, then there can be no certain ſtandard of the credibility of facts; but this will vary as does the experience of thoſe to whom they are propoſed; for all men have not the ſame opportunities of ſeeing the ſame

* The fourth Eſſay he calls *Sceptical Doubts*, and the fifth, *Sceptical Solutions of these Doubts.*

events; and a thing may be familiar to one, and never heard of by another. That there are many events true, which men can have no experience of, is certain. But were the doctrine which we are now oppoſing to be admitted, no ſuch thing could ever be made credible to one who has not ſeen it: but what ſtrange work would this make in life? and how ridiculous would a man make himſelf if he rejected matters of fact, indiſputably true, and confirmed to him by the moſt unexceptionable teſtimony,—merely becauſe they were contrary to his experience. For inſtance, what could be more contrary to experience, *to firm unalterable experience*, within theſe three or four centuries, than that a ſmall iron bullet, of a few pounds weight, ſhould be able to batter down the thickeſt and ſtrongeſt walls? At the firſt invention of fire arms, ſuppoſe that this fact had been atteſted to a perſon at a diſtance, who was entirely unacquainted with the principles and mechaniſm of the new machine; ſuppoſe it atteſted in

the ſtrongeſt and moſt unexceptionable manner, by thouſands of witneſſes, perſons of credit and reputation, perſons who were ſpectators, and who could not be ſuſpected of any deſign to impoſe a lie—would it be enough for the perſon to whom this matter of fact was propoſed, to ſay I will not believe it, becauſe you tell me a thing contrary to uniform and conſtant experience? would he not be looked upon as a whimſical ſceptic, if he refuſed to believe it on this evidence?—Certainly he would, with every body except the author of *Philoſophical Eſſays*, according to whoſe principles this evidence muſt be reſiſted. So that this doctrine, that no event, however well atteſted, is to be believed, unleſs it be warranted by experience, excludes from being credible, events deducible from the laws of nature, and which are to be accounted for on mechanical principles, as well as it does miracles. It therefore proves too much, and conſequently proves nothing at all. This will be farther illuſtrated by putting the following caſe:

It is contrary to the uniform, conſtant experience of the inhabitants under the torrid zone, that water ſhould become ſolid as the dry land. Suppoſe, then, what we know muſt have happened, that perſons from our part of the world ſhould go into thoſe ſultry regions, and affirm there, to the natives, that water frequently became thus hard in the countries they came from; ſuppoſe that vaſt numbers of witneſſes agree in the ſame atteſtation, and that this matter of fact is affirmed by every one who arrives from our climates; muſt all this weight of teſtimony go for nothing, merely becauſe they aſſert what is contrary to firm and unalterable experience? This would be very abſurd, yet, upon our author's principles it muſt.—Nor will it make any difference to ſay, that ſuch events alone are incapable of being rendered credible by teſtimony, which are contrary to uniform experience in all different parts of the world. For if a perſon be ignorant what is uſual in other climates, then a thing contrary to the ſettled courſe

of nature in the country where he lives, is as much a miracle (to him I mean) as a thing contrary to the ſettled courſe of nature in all parts of the world. That a dead man ſhould be again brought to life, is an event contrary to the ſettled courſe of nature in all parts of the world: and ſuppoſing ſuch an event atteſted in the moſt unexceptionable manner to the inhabitants of any country whatever, they could have no greater reaſon to look upon it as incredible, than the inhabitants of the torrid zone have to look upon the freezing of water as incredible.

Again—if no event, however well atteſted, is to be believed, unleſs we have experience for it, then would it follow that we could never infer the poſſibility of any events by arguments drawn from reaſon, or from the nature of the thing. Our author was aware of this, and, therefore, to obviate ſuch an objection, he endeavours to prove that the diſtinction uſually made betwixt argu-

ments drawn from experience, and thoſe drawn from reaſon is, at the bottom, erroneous; and aſſerts, "that all thoſe arguments, which are ſuppoſed to be the "mere effects of reaſoning and reflection, "will be found to terminate, at laſt, in "ſome general principle and concluſion, "for which we can aſſign no reaſon but "obſervation and experience."* But is it poſſible for any ſerious man to reaſon thus in earneſt? For, if reaſon, antecedent to experience can, in no inſtance, point out a connexion betwixt cauſe and effect, then muſt we ſay that there is no foundation in reaſon for believing that a fabric, conſiſting of a variety of parts, nicely and regularly put together, is the effect of a *deſigning cauſe*, rather than that it ſprang from *blind* chance.—We univerſally aſſent to the truth of this propoſition, that whatever had a beginning aroſe from a cauſe prior to it, and producing it. But will our author aſſert that we could never

* P. 74.

have known the certainty of this, unleſs we had drawn it from experience? Will he aſſert that experience is our ſole ground for concluding that life, conſciouſneſs, and reaſon, could not be communicated but by a cauſe veſted with ſuch perfections? Strange as theſe doctrines are, they are the obvious conſequences of the poſition that experience alone points out the connexion between cauſe and effect. Nor indeed are theſe conſequences ſuch as our author will diſown; for he expreſsly tells us, *that if we reaſon* a priori, *any thing may appear able to produce any thing, the falling of a pebble may, for aught we know, extinguiſh the ſun, or the wiſh of a man controul the planets in their orbits:* and again, *that not only the will of the Supreme Being may create matter, but for aught we can know,* a priori, *the will of any other being might create it, or any other cauſe that the moſt whimſical imagination can aſſign.**—I need ſay no more to you I am ſure, nor

* P. 254.

indeed to any perſon of ſound judgment, to make you diſclaim this author as a guide, whoſe argument againſt *miracles*, if it has any weight, is equally an argument againſt the exiſtence of an intelligent *firſt cauſe*.

The ſophiſtry of our author's argument, by which he would prove, that without experience, we never can diſcover the connexion between cauſe and effect, lies here, that he brings his inſtances from the laws of matter and motion eſtabliſhed in the world; which laws being, confeſſedly, arbitrary conſtitutions of the Creator, the manner of their operations cannot, to be ſure, be deduced from any previous reaſoning, but muſt be drawn ſolely from experience; and from theſe particular inſtances he infers his univerſal concluſion; which is evidently falſe. For does it at all follow, that, becauſe there is no connexion diſcoverable *a priori* betwixt cauſe and effect in ſome caſes, there is no connexion diſcoverable *a priori* in any caſe? Becauſe

God (and I pretend to reaſon with none but believers of a God) has eſtabliſhed ſuch and ſuch laws in the univerſe—for inſtance, that fire ſhould conſume, and water ſuffocate, and a heavy body deſcend—will it follow that, in this caſe, we cannot diſcover from reaſon, independent of all experience, that God could have eſtabliſhed laws different from theſe at firſt, and can, when he thinks fit, ſuſpend them now that they are eſtabliſhed? This was what our author ought to have proved, and for this plain reaſon:—every one who has admitted the exiſtence of a God, will be apt to urge that we can diſcover, by reaſoning, *a priori*, that there is a connexion between an Omnipotent Being and Almighty cauſe; and *every* effect that is the object of power, and, conſequently, that we can diſcover, by reaſoning, *a priori*, the poſſibility of miracles, becauſe it requires the exertion of no greater power to reverſe the eſtabliſhed laws of nature (in the doing of which conſiſts a miracle) than, at the beginning, to eſtabliſh them.

Our author foreſaw ſome ſuch objection as this might be urged; for he tells us that "though the Being to whom the miracle "is aſcribed be Almighty, it does not, "upon that account, become a whit more "probable; ſince it is impoſſible for us to "know the attributes or actions of ſuch a "Being, otherwiſe than from the expe-"rience which we have of his productions "in the uſual courſe of nature." Here he preſents us again with ſome of his paradoxes. Who would not have thought that an Almighty Being could produce every poſſibility, and conſequently depart from *his productions in the uſual courſe of nature?* A perſon of a plain ordinary underſtanding would have thought, that the very idea of Omnipotence implied the power of doing this: and will expect to hear it demonſtrated, that nothing is poſſible but what is eſtabliſhed in the uſual courſe of nature before he alters his opinion.—Unleſs, therefore, our author can demonſtrate this, which, however enterprizing, he has not pretended to do; un-

leſs he can ſhew that an event, contrary to the uſual courſe of things, is not an object of power; the idea of the omnipotence of God will lead us to admit the poſſibility of ſuch events, and if once their poſſibility be admitted, in ſpite of all the quibbles of the ſophiſt, and all the art of the ſceptic, common ſenſe will teach us, that ſuch events, which are what we call miracles, may be made credible by teſtimony; becauſe they are ſuppoſed to be matters of fact, of the certainty of which ſpectators may have all the aſſurance they can have for the certainty of the moſt common events.

But why need I take ſo much pains to prove that miracles may become credible by teſtimony, when I can bring in our author as concurring in the ſame concluſion? It is frequently the fate of writers, eſpecially of ſuch as aim at ſomething new and ſingular, to confute themſelves in their own works; and that the author of the *Eſſay on Miracles* has done this, will ap-

pear from the following quotation :—" I " beg the limitation here made may be re- " marked, when I ſay that a miracle can " never be proved ſo as to be the founda- " tion of a new ſyſtem of religion. For I " own that otherwiſe there may poſſibly " be miracles, or violations of the ordina- " ry courſe of nature, of ſuch a kind as to " admit of proof from human teſtimony, " though, perhaps, it will be impoſſible to " find any ſuch in all the records of hiſtory. " Thus, ſuppoſe all authors, in all langua- " ges, agree, that from the firſt of *January* " 1600, there was a total darkneſs over all " the earth for eight days; ſuppoſe that " the tradition of this event is ſtill ſtrong " and lively among the people; that all " travellers, who return from foreign " countries, bring us accounts of the ſame " tradition, without the leaſt variation or " contradiction; it is evident that our " preſent philoſophers, inſtead of doubting " of that fact, ought to receive it for " certain, and ought to ſearch for

"the cauſes whence it might be de-
"rived."*

Not to inſiſt on the obvious inconſiſtency of recommending it to the philoſophers, to ſearch for the cauſes of an event contrary to uniform and conſtant experience, when, according to our author's doctrine, ſuch a ſearch would be abſurd and uſeleſs, *becauſe experience alone points out the connexion between cauſe and effect*, not to inſiſt on this, I ſhall beg leave to obſerve, that in the above quotation, he himſelf pulls down his own favorite ſcheme.—For I appeal to every reader, whether we have not here a confeſſion, that human teſtimony may, in ſome caſes, give credibility to miracles, or violations of the laws of nature? He forgets then that he had laid it down as a principle "that *no* teſtimony for *any* kind of mi-
"racle can ever poſſibly amount to a pro-
"bability, much leſs a proof;† that it is

* P. 199. † Ibid.

" experience *only* which gives authority to " human teſtimony,*—that a miracle ſup- " ported by *any* human teſtimony is more " properly a ſubject of deriſion than of " argument ;"†—for here he allows that teſtimony, under certain circumſtances, may give credibility to a ſtranger prodigy than ever happened. Perhaps he will ſay, that the univerſality of the miracle and of the teſtimony, in the inſtance aſſigned by him, makes it different from all others. I anſwer, that admitting it does, ſtill he ſtands charged with a contradiction of his own principles, which, how he can get clear of, I ſee not. His general opinion, as is evident from his own words juſt quoted is, that human teſtimony, in no inſtance, can prove a miracle ; how, therefore, can this poſition be maintained, and it be granted, at the ſame time as he does grant, that ſuch a teſtimony as he deſcribes will give credibility to the miracle of the eight days darkneſs? In the one

* P. 198. † P. 194.

place he rejects human teſtimony *abſolutely*, and *without any reſtrictions*, when reporting a miracle; and, in the other place, he gives us leave, provided human teſtimony have certain qualifications mentioned by him, to admit it, however miraculous the fact atteſted be.

But I ſee no reaſon why a *local* violation of the courſe of nature—a darkneſs, for inſtance, of eight days in one country only, if atteſted by thoſe who lived near the place where it happened, and confirmed by the tradition of thoſe who had opportunities of knowing the fact, ſhould not be looked upon as equally credible with the univerſal darkneſs inſtanced by our author. The poſſibility of a *local* miracle cannot, ſurely, be denied by the perſon who admits the poſſibility of ſo ſtrange a miracle as one extending over the whole earth. Now, if a local miracle be poſſible, nothing more can be requiſite to eſtabliſh its credibility, but that we have all the evidence for it that the nature

of the fact can admit of; and as it was not univerſal, univerſal teſtimony muſt not be expected. For the nature of the proof from teſtimony is the ſame, whether we have five hundred or five millions of witneſſes. If the leſſer number have equal opportunities of knowing what they atteſt, and are equally credible in other reſpects with the greater number, we have equal reaſon for admitting the teſtimony of both.

You ſee, Sir, that the great champion againſt miracles, does himſelf admit, that human teſtimony may prove a miracle of as extraordinary a kind too as we can ſuppoſe ever to happen.

But, upon a cloſer attention, I begin to think I have injured him, by ſuppoſing that he could ever deny that miracles, in general, can be made credible by teſtimony; for, it ſeems, his opinion is that only ſuch miracles cannot be made credible by teſtimony, as are urged *to be the foundation*

*of a new ſyſtem of religion; and he deſires us to underſtand him with this limitation.** Not to miſrepreſent him, therefore, this limitation ſhall be allowed him. But, at the ſame time, I would aſk him this plain queſtion, if this be allowed him, will it not involve him in a labyrinth of contradictions? For it matters not, whether a miracle be wrought in ſupport of a religion or no—our author's boaſted argument ſtrikes at all miracles; and, according to his principles, *all* miracles muſt be rejected, becauſe *all* miracles are events contrary to firm and unalterable experience. Before, therefore, he had admitted that human teſtimony may give credibility to ſuch miracles as are not *aſcribed to a new ſyſtem of religion*, he ſhould have taken care to have weighed the obvious conſequences of his own arguments, which expreſsly forbid him to believe *any* miracles at all.—But not to carry this charge of inconſiſtency any farther, we have here a clear view of

* P. 199.

the principles of this gentleman. He will believe any thing when religion is out of the queſtion, let it be ever ſo ſtrange; but whenever religion is concerned, he is ſo ſcrupulous, that he will admit nothing. He grants that the moſt extraordinary prodigies may be proved by teſtimony, provided no body can aſſign any end or purpoſe they could be deſigned to anſwer; but whenever miracles are appealed to as *the foundation of a new ſyſtem of religion*, that is, whenever a wiſe and important end can be ſerved by them, then, he would have us believe, that we have been impoſed upon, and that no ſuch miracles were really performed. How wild and inconſiſtent this way of talking (for I cannot call it reaſoning) is, I appeal even to yourſelf; which, while it abſolutely refuſes credibility to the miracles of the Chriſtian ſcriptures, allows us to believe ſuch miracles and prodigies as are to be met with in *Livy* or *Dion Caſſius*.

But what is the reaſon aſſigned for the

incredibility of miracles, when they are made the foundation of a new religion? "Becauſe," ſays our author, "men, in all "ages, have been ſo much impoſed upon "by ridiculous ſtories of that kind, that "this very circumſtance would be a full "proof of the cheat, and ſufficient, with "all men of ſenſe, not only to make them "reject the fact, but even reject it with-"out farther examination."*

Are we then brought back, after all the efforts of metaphyſical ſcepticiſm, to this weak and childiſh argument—That, becauſe ſome men have been knaves and fools, therefore, all muſt be ſuch? That becauſe ſome men's teſtimony in relating miracles has been falſe, no teſtimony whatever for a miraculous fact ought ever to be taken?—To infer from the world's having been ſometimes impoſed upon by falſe miracles, that no miracles have ever been true, is as abſurd as if one ſhould

* P. 200.

deny that there is any real virtue among men, becauſe there is much hypocriſy; or as if he ſhould refuſe to take any coin, becauſe it ſometimes has been counterfeited. Counterfeit coin, ſuppoſes that there is ſuch a thing in the world as good money, and no body would pretend, outwardly, to be virtuous, unleſs ſome were really ſo. In the ſame manner, the falſe miracles, about which ſo much work is made, ſuppoſe the exiſtence of real ones; and the cheats that have been impoſed upon the world, far from furniſhing us with reaſons to reject all miracles in general, are, on the contrary, a ſtrong proof that *ſome*, of which they are imitations, have been genuine. By what criterion we can diſtinguiſh the true from the falſe, is indeed a moſt important enquiry, and will be the ſubject of the following ſheets.

I ſhall not proſecute my examination of this author's boaſted argument againſt miracles any farther, both becauſe it has been fully and effectually anſwered by

others*, and becauſe what I have juſt thrown out muſt ſatisfy you that events contrary to firm and conſtant experience, may become credible by human teſtimony, eſpecially as you have *his* word for it; and he was the firſt, I know of, who ever denied it, giving us his reaſon for doing ſo. In this acting the part of a fair adverſary, and at the ſame time, in my opinion, giving the ſevereſt blow to the enemies of the Goſpel miracles that they ever received; becauſe he has ſhewn that he could not (and if he could not, I am ſure no other perſon can) eſtabliſh the incredibility of miracles, but by calling in queſtion the firſt principles of human knowledge; but by introducing the moſt extravagant ſcepticiſm, that ever made its appearance under the venerable name of philoſophy.—I ſhall only add, that an author who eſpouſes ſuch opinions, can never

* By Dr. Rutherforth in a ſermon; by an anonymous author of Remarks on an Eſſay concerning Miracles; ſuppoſed to be a worthy prelate; but more at large by the Revd Mr. Adams of Shrewſbury, and by Dr. Campbell of Aberdeen.

be a dangerous enemy to religion. His arguments having novelty, may pleaſe for a while; but ſo oppoſite are they to every one's ſettled notions, that their influence cannot be laſting. Sorry I am to ſay, that the author of the *Philoſophical Eſſays* ſeems to have a right to this character,—a character which muſt ſink the value of his writings, in ſpite of the moſt eminent abilities.

Though I have ſufficiently expoſed the weakneſs of Mr. Hume's ſceptical ſubtilties, the advocates of infidelity, in general, not having adopted them, it is incumbent on me to take notice of a more popular objection to which they uſually have recourſe. It is this, that man has a light within, which anſwers, to the full, all the purpoſes of religion, and that a due attention to his rational faculties, will, without the aſſiſtance of ſupernatural inſtruction, enable him to know and to act in conformity to the divine will, as the means of

ſecuring the favour of heaven, and the happineſs of a future life.

We may pronounce this to be an aſſertion equally preſumptuous and unfounded. For, however inſtructed man might be, as originally created, it could not but be the care of an all-wiſe and benevolent being to rekindle the light of natural reaſon, when its corrupted and debaſed ſtate had involved the human race in all the miſchiefs of the moſt humiliating darkneſs; a darkneſs, which we know was univerſal, and would have been inſuperable, if it had not been diſpelled by the light of revelation. And thoſe minute philoſophers of our days, who diſclaim all revelation as unneceſſary, would do well to conſider, that *Socrates*, the moſt diſtinguiſhed philoſopher of heathen antiquity, entertained no ſuch notions of the ſufficiency of human reaſon. For he expreſsly tells us, *that we muſt wait till we learn from an inſtructor who careth for us and has a wonderful concern for our intereſts, in what manner we are to conduct our-*

*ſelves with regard to God and our fellow-creatures**. This verdict alone, I eſteem as a complete anſwer to all the ſophiſtries of a *Collins*, and all the declamation of a *Tindal*.

It is upon this footing, that the miracles recorded in the New Teſtament are to be defended. For the expediency of a divine revelation being once admitted, the expediency of miracles may eaſily be proved. —There are but two ways by which God could reveal his will to mankind—either by an immediate influence on the mind of *every individual* of every age, or by ſelecting *ſome particular perſons* to be his inſtru-

* This remarkable judgment of Socrates concerning the expediency of a revelation, is to be met with in Plato's Second Alcibiades.

Ἀναγκαῖον ἦν ἐξι περιμένειν ἕως ἄν τις μάθη ὡς δεῖ πρὸς Θεὸς καὶ πρὸς ἀνθρώπες διακεισθαι. Α. Πότε ἦν παρέξαι ὁ χρόνος ἕτος; ὦ Σώκρατες; καὶ τις ὁ παιδέυσων; ἥδισα γὰρ ἄν μοι δοκῶ ἰδεῖν τῦτον τὸν ἄνθρωπον τίς ἐξιν. Σωκρ. Οὗτός ἐξιν ὦ μέλει περι σε.—ἀλλὰ μὴν κἀκεῖνος θαυμασην ὅσην περι σε προθυμίαν ἐχει. Platonis Dialog. Select. Ed. Cantab. p. 255, 256.

ments in reforming and enlightening the world, and for this purpoſe veſted by him with ſuch powers, as might carry the ſtrongeſt evidence that they were really divine teachers.

But with regard to the firſt method which I have mentioned, if you ſhould urge that this would have been the propereſt, as it would have ſuperſeded the uſe and neceſſity of miracles, I would deſire you to conſider, that you admit what is more extraordinary and incredible, than the miracles you reject. For upon this ſuppoſition, you muſt believe it to be more probable, that God ſhould be continually ſuperſeding and acting contrary to his own appointment, by making a new revelation of his will to every individual, than that he ſhould only do it upon a ſpecial and extraordinary occaſion.—

The other method, therefore, of publiſhing a revelation from Heaven, was to be made choice of—ſome particular perſons

were to be appointed to teach and authenticate it to the world. But how were ſuch perſons, whom we ſuppoſe teachers from Heaven, to prevail with others to receive what they taught, as the will of God? Will their bare aſſertion be ſufficient? At this rate, a wide door would be opened to impoſture, and every one might, at pleaſure, publiſh the whims of a diſordered imagination, or the errors of a depraved heart as meſſages from Heaven. It muſt, therefore, be in the power of the divine teacher to appeal to ſome credential, that may prove he has a right to be believed.

Perhaps you will ſay, that the intrinſic excellence and reaſonableneſs, of what is taught, will be effectual for this purpoſe. But, certainly you cannot aſſert this if you reflect, that, whatever right reaſon might do, corrupted reaſon, reaſon ſunk in idolatry and ſuperſtition on the one hand, and in immoral practice on the other, would pay but little regard to the inſtructions of thoſe who could produce no authority, but

the intrinſic one of their inſtructions being agreeable to reaſon. And hence it was, that even if any of the *Pagan* philoſophers had taught a perfect rule of religion and morality, which however was far from being the caſe, none of them could ever have done much good as to inſtructing reforming mankind. They wanted authority to teach, and ſanctions to enforce, as a law, what they taught. And as neither the bare aſſertion of the teacher, nor the reaſonableneſs of what he teaches, can be ſufficient to prevail with others, to receive him as ſent from God, what elſe can be done, in order to prove this, but to veſt him with ſuch powers as might carry the cleareſt evidence of a divine aſſiſtance? And what clearer evidence can be produced of this aſſiſtance, than his being veſted with a power of performing ſuch works, as *no man could perform unleſs God were with him?*

I truſt, that I have not unſucceſsfully defended the Chriſtian revelation from ſuch of the attacks of the advocates of infidelity

as have been already conſidered by me. But ſufficient notice has not as yet been taken of an objection, which as it ſeems to be their moſt favourite topic; it is incumbent on me, if I would do full juſtice to the ſubject, to examine with due attention. The objection is this—That men in all ages, having been ſo much impoſed upon by falſe pretenſions to ſupernatural powers, a juſt ſuſpicion is created, that no ſuch powers have ever been actually exerted; eſpecially as it is confidently aſſerted, that the miracles recorded in the New Teſtament, and which we believe to be the works of God, are not ſupported by ſtronger evidence than are thoſe of Paganiſm and Popery which we reject. How little foundation there is for this objection, will, I flatter myſelf, be moſt compleatly proved, in the extenſive view of the ſubject which ſhall be laid before you. The accounts which have been publiſhed to the world of miracles in general, may, I think, be arranged under theſe two claſſes; Firſt, of events confeſſedly beyond the power of natural

cauſes to produce; and, ſecondly, of events which though not in their own nature miraculous, have, in particular inſtances, been believed to be ſuch from a conſideration of the peculiar circumſtances under which they were brought about.

Entering now upon the taſk I have undertaken, I ſhall begin with an accurate examination of the miracles reported to have been wrought amongſt Pagans of old, and Chriſtians of latter times, and hope to produce ſubſtantial reaſons for our rejection of both claſſes of them, by ſhewing, firſt, that ſuch of them as are confeſſedly of the ſupernatural kind, may, from the inſufficiency of the evidence produced in ſupport of them, be juſtly ſuſpected to have never happened; and, ſecondly, that ſuch of them as we may admit to have happened, though aſcribed to the exertion of ſupernatural power, were brought about by the operation of cauſes merely natural.

After having carefully illuſtrated and

confirmed this ſtatement, I ſhall proceed to an examination of the Goſpel miracles, from which it will appear in oppoſition to the aſſertion of Mr. Hume and his infidel friends, that they may moſt eaſily be diſtinguiſhed from the other events of the marvellous kind, which are either the fabrications of impoſture or the dreams of credulity, and that both claſſes of them, recorded in the New Teſtament, are ſupported by evidence ſo entirely unexceptionable, as muſt convince every lover of truth, that they were really performed, and that *all* of them are undoubtedly miraculous.

Such then, is the plan upon which I am to proceed, and on which I build my expectation, of convincing you of the truth of the Chriſtian faith. If the premiſes propoſed may be made good, as I am perſuaded they may, at leaſt in the hands of ſome abler diſputant, the concluſion is, that the Chriſtian religion muſt needs be true, upon your own conceſſion. For

your conceſſion was, that a perſon aſſuming the character of a teacher ſent from God, and veſted with a miraculous power, has a right to be obeyed in whatſoever he teaches. Now that Chriſt aſſumed the character of a teacher from God, you will readily grant, and it is incumbent upon me to endeavour to prove, agreeably to my plan, that he was veſted with the power of performing real miracles.

In order to this, and in purſuance of the plan that I have laid down, let us now take into conſideration ſuch of the wonderful works ſaid to have been performed amongſt Pagans and Papiſts as could not poſſibly be brought about by operation of any natural cauſe, and, I flatter myſelf, that the evidence produced in their ſupport will appear to be ſo very defective and inſufficient, as juſtly to warrant our rejecting them as idle tales that never happened, and the inventions of bold and intereſted deceivers.

I have already obſerved, when I treated of the evidence requiſite to give credibility to miracles, that the teſtimony ſupporting them muſt be free from every ſuſpicion of fraud and impoſture. And the reaſon is this—*The Hiſtory of Miracles* (to make uſe of the words of an * author whoſe authority you will think of ſome weight) *is of a kind totally different from that of common events, the one to be ſuſpected always of courſe, without the ſtrongeſt evidence to confirm it; the other to be admitted of courſe, without as ſtrong reaſon to ſuſpect it.* So that, wherever the evidence urged for miracles leaves grounds for a ſuſpicion of fraud and impoſition, the very ſuſpicion furniſhes ſufficient reaſons for diſbelieving them. And what I ſhall offer, under this head, will make it evident that thoſe miracles, which the Proteſtant Chriſtian thinks himſelf at liberty to reject, have always been ſo inſuf-

* Middleton's Free Inquiry, p. 217.

ficiently atteſted as to leave full ſcope for fraud and impoſition to play their parts.

That I may proceed with the greater perſpicuity, I ſhall here lay down a few general rules, by which we may try thoſe pretended miracles, one and all, wherever they occur, and which may ſet forth the grounds on which we ſuſpect them to be falſe. It would be an endleſs and an unneceſſary taſk to enumerate all the manifold accounts of miracles reported amongſt *Pagans* and amongſt *Papiſts*, and to examine them one by one, critically, in order to diſprove them. I ſhall only, by way of illuſtration of my rules, ſelect a few memorable accounts by which may be formed a judgment of the reſt.

Now, I think it will be impoſſible for you, to aſſign any particular inſtance of a *Pagan* or *Popiſh* miracle, the accounts of which do not labour under one or other of the following defects, which we think warrant our diſbelieving them.

Firſt, we ſuſpect miracles to be falſe when the accounts of them are not publiſhed to the world till long after the time when they are ſaid to have been performed.

Secondly, we ſuſpect them to be falſe, when the accounts are not publiſhed in the place where it is pretended they were performed, but are propagated only at a great diſtance from the ſuppoſed ſcene of action.

Thirdly, ſuppoſing the accounts to have the two foregoing qualifications, we ſtill may ſuſpect them to be falſe, if in the time when, and at the place where they took their riſe, they might be ſuffered to paſs without examination.

And when we come to try by this teſt any particular miracle of *Paganiſm* or *Popery*, which can be traced up to contemporary witneſſes, and was publiſhed on the ſpot, it will be inſtantly obſerved that

it labours under one or other, or both, of the above-mentioned circumſtances.—We ſhall ever find the people refuſing any examination of the miracle, through a blind credulity and eagerneſs of belief, or the promoters of it, armed with power, rendering an examination impracticable.

But what occaſion, you may ſay, can there be for my troubling myſelf to point out to you the reaſons why thoſe miracles ought to be rejected as falſe, of the truth of which you never profeſſed yourſelf to be a believer?—I anſwer, that though you have not profeſſed a belief of them, you and your friends have repreſented them as bearing equally ſtrong marks of genuineneſs with the miracles of the goſpel, with this profeſſed view to have both of them thought ſpurious. It became neceſſary, therefore, in order to extricate ourſelves out of this labyrinth in which you would involve us, to point out ſuch defects in the evidence of the miracles ſet up in oppoſition to thoſe of the Goſpel, as warrant our

diſbelieving them. When I have examined, then, the moſt memorable accounts of thoſe ſpurious miracles, according to the rules above-mentioned, I ſhall proceed to prove that the objections which deſtroy *their* credibility, cannot, with any juſtice, be urged againſt the evidence of the miracles of the Goſpel.

The firſt rule laid down was,—That we may juſtly ſuſpect thoſe miracles to be falſe, the accounts of which are not publiſhed to the world, till long after the time when they are ſaid to have been performed.

In order to give credibility to any diſtant fact, it is expected either that uninterrupted tradition ſhould have preſerved and handed down the memory of it; or, at leaſt, if the tradition has been interrupted, that it ſhould be mentioned in contemporary records.—And if common matters of fact, which cannot be traced up to the age they pretend to, are not to be admitted

as credible, this certainly holds much ſtronger with regard to miracles. Now, upon examination, it will be found that the accounts which we have, of many of the boaſted wonders of *Paganiſm* and *Popery*, are of this kind, that is, cannot be traced up to the age they pretend to, but were publiſhed to the world when length of time had, by removing the means of examination, rendered a detection of their falſehood impoſſible.

And, firſt of all, under this head may be ranged the account of the miracles of *Apollonius* of *Tyana*, publiſhed to the world in his life written by *Philoſtratus*.

It is certain that *Philoſtratus* did not write till above an hundred years after the death of his hero. What evidence, therefore, have we, that the facts attributed to this wonder-worker by his hiſtorian, were ever heard of, before he wrote? That the life of *Apollonius* had been already written by *Mæragenes* is, indeed,

certain *. But ſo far is this from proving that the miracles aſcribed to him by *Philoſtratus* had been, before this, taken notice of by *Mæragenes*, that the direct contrary may be inferred from this, that *Philoſtratus*, inſtead of making uſe of ſuch materials as were already in the hands of the public†, acquaints us that he compoſed

* Origen. contra Celſum L. 6. p. 302.

† The reaſon why Philoſtratus did not make uſe of Mæragenes, who had written Apollonius's life before he did, may be gueſſed at from what Origen tells us:---That Apollonius, according to the account given of him by Mæragenes, was looked upon as a magician and a juggler. Ἁλωναι ὑπο της εν Απολλωνιω μαγειας ουκ αγενεις τινας φιλοσοφους, ὡς προς γοητα αυτον ιστελθοντας.---Origen loc. cit. The authority, therefore, of Mæragenes could not be appealed to by Philoſtratus, without defeating the intention of his book. The former ſeems to have repreſented Apollonius, as he really was, a perſon who could by his ſuperior art and dexterity, perform ſurprizing feats and legerdemain tricks, which the ſuperſtition and ignorance of the times gave him encouragement to attribute to magic. A magician being, in thoſe ages, looked upon (as appears from many places of Origen's book juſt quoted) to be one who, by the uſe of certain incantations, and charms, and forms of barbarous words, or by the celebration of certain odd rites, could force ſuperior beings or dæmons to aſſiſt him. This view of Apollonius's character was too diſadvantageous to be adopted

his work, partly from hearſay talk, and partly from an account of *Apollonius* delivered to him by the empreſs *Julia* the wife of *Severus*, ſaid, indeed, on the authority of the unknown perſon who gave it to the empreſs, to have been written by one *Damis*, a companion of *Apollonius*, but never heard of in the world, till it furniſhed materials to *Philoſtratus* *.

Is it poſſible, therefore, to give credit to any hiſtory, much leſs to a hiſtory of miracles, which ſtands on this moſt ſuſpicious evidence? For the whole credit due to the miracles of *Apollonius*, is ultimately to be reſolved into the credit due to *Philoſtratus* himſelf; and, ſurely, little credit is due to him. We have no other evidence for the truth of theſe ſtrange facts, but the affirmation of one

by Philoſtratus, whoſe work was calculated to repreſent him as a worker of real miracles by the aſſiſtance of the Pagan gods, in oppoſition to the miracles aſcribed by Chriſtians to the founder of their religion.

* Philoſtratus, L. 1. C. iii.

who lived ſo long after they are ſuppoſed to have happened, that he could not poſſibly know, allowing him inclined to be impartial, whether the materials he had to work upon were true or falſe. And not only this—but we have no other evidence for theſe wonders, but the affirmation of one, whom we have ſufficient grounds to ſuſpect of having a deſign to obtrude a hiſtory of lies upon the world. —This, indeed, is more than I need prove, to deſtroy the credibility of the miracles of *Apollonius*, which is overturned by this ſingle conſideration, that the account we have of them was not written by one, who had opportunities of knowing the truth, nor publiſhed but to thoſe who, through length of time, had no opportunities of detecting the forgery.

However, I ſhall add ſome further reflexions, from which it will appear, that internal marks of falſehood are as glaring, from *Philoſtratus's* own narration, as the defects

of its external evidence have been ſhewn to be.

The ſupporters of *Paganiſm* having obſerved, that the rapid and extenſive propagation of Chriſtianity was produced by an appeal to the miracles of its founder, thought that they could not more effectually ſerve their dying cauſe than by ſetting up a ſimilar claim, in defence of the eſtabliſhed idolatry. Accordingly, *Philoſtratus* undertook to write the life of *Apollonius*. That it may not be ſaid, I aſſert without proof, and decide without argument, ſuffer me to mention a few particulars which will demonſtrate, that *Philoſtratus* was not ſo careful to relate what *Apollonius* really performed, as to invent a ſeries of miracles, which might be parallel to thoſe aſcribed by Chriſtians to *Jeſus*, and which correſpond ſo exactly with facts recorded in the New Teſtament, that we need not heſitate in pronouncing them imitated from it.

Is *Jeſus* ſtiled in the Goſpels the Son of God? *Philoſtratus* makes his hero the reputed ſon of *Jupiter*. Do the evangeliſts mention the appearance of an angel to the Bleſſed Virgin, and the ſhining of a ſtar at the birth of *Jeſus*? *Philoſtratus* tells us, that the gods admoniſhed in a dream the mother of *Apollonius*, of the birth of this great infant, and that, when he was born, a flaſh of lightning fell from Heaven*. Did *Jeſus* raiſe the daughter of *Jairus* from the dead? Our philoſopher, in imitation of this, raiſes to life a young maid at *Rome*†. Do the Goſpels abound with cures of *dæmoniacs*? *Apollonius* alſo is introduced performing the ſame. Nay, farther, it is extremely remarkable (and to the biſhop of *Avranche*, Mr. *Huet*, we owe the obſervation) that *Philoſtratus* in relating how *Apollonius* broke off a correſpondence which one had with a *dæmon*, uſes almoſt the ſame words which are uſed by *St. Luke*,

* Philoſtratus, Lib. i. C. iv. † Ib. Lib. 4. C. x.

in relating the cure of a *dæmoniac* by our Saviour. The evangeliſt * tells us, that the evil ſpirit cried out, δεομαι σου μη με βασανιζης, I beſeech you not to torment me: And *Philoſtratus*, in his narration, ſays, that the ſpirit ἐδειτο μη βασανιζειν αυτο, beſeeched him not to torment it. Is it to be imagined that this ſimilitude of expreſſion could ariſe merely from chance?—When we conſider, on the one hand, that the phraſeology of the writers of the New Teſtament was a very peculiar one, and, on the other hand, reflect on the great latitude of expreſſion in the *Greek* tongue, that *Philoſtratus* ſhould uſe exactly the ſame words with *St. Luke* will appear extremely unlikely, unleſs we ſuppoſe he had his Goſpel before him.

Again do we read in the Acts of the Apoſtles, that *Paul* and *Silas* were miraculouſly let out of priſon, and that their fetters fell off? *Apollonius* muſt alſo be

* Luke, Ch. viii. V. 28.

veſted with the power of ſhaking off his fetters at pleaſure*. And were the apoſtles inſpired with the gift of tongues? This qualification muſt alſo be beſtowed on our philoſopher †. Only his hiſtorian has happened a little to forget himſelf: for in the courſe of his hiſtory, *Apollonius* cannot converſe with *Phraortes*, but through the help of an interpreter.

But as the reſurrection of *Jeſus* is the capital miracle of the Goſpel, it was eſpecially neceſſary that *Apollonius* ſhould alſo vie with *Jeſus* here. Accordingly we find the hero of *Philoſtratus* riſing from the dead ‡, and appearing, though I think, but to one perſon whom he inſtructed in the immortality of the ſoul.

Theſe inſtances, out of a great many others, muſt convince every impartial reader that *Philoſtratus* had the Goſpels be-

* Phil. Lib. 7. C. x. † Ib. Lib. 1. C. xiii.

‡ Phil. Lib. 8. C. xiii.

fore him when he compoſed his Life of *Apollonius*, and that he invented a ſet of miracles which might bear a ſtriking reſemblance to thoſe of the Chriſtian teacher.

Other internal marks of *Philoſtratus's* book being a romance, we have, in his curious diſcoveries of monkies as big as men, of beaſts with a human head and lion's body, of women half white and half black, of wool growing like corn, of countries abounding with *phœnixes*, *griffins* and *dragons*. A book every where interſperſed with ſuch anecdotes, may, perhaps, gain credit with one who can digeſt the ſpurious travels of *St. John Mandeville*, or the wonders of *Lilliput* and *Brobdignac*; but with every ſerious perſon, it muſt have carried its own confutation even though we could have traced it up to the time of *Apollonius*.

Having detained you ſo long in reviewing it, and looking upon the ſimilar exploits of *Pythagoras*, as related by *Por-*

phyry and *Iamblicus*, to be unworthy of particular notice, let us now deſcend to times nearer our own, to the times of monkiſh ignorance and fraud, ſhining with the glorious light of miracles, if we believe either the public decrees of the Church of *Rome*, or pay any credit to its private writers; but, in reality, times when the ſimplicity of the Goſpel degenerated into groſs ſuperſtition, and when the inventions of men, ſuperadded to the word of God, were not more abſurd, than the fraudulent contrivances to ſupport them were numerous.

I think I may ſafely affirm that many of the moſt noted miracles among *Roman Catholics*, are to be ranked in the claſs of thoſe facts whoſe credibility is deſtroyed, by their not having been publiſhed till length of time had thrown a veil over the forgery.

Nay ſo certain is this, that it is demonſtrable that many of thoſe ſaints, to whom

wonders have been attributed, never had exiſtence, but in the brains of the ſhameleſs interpolators, and ignorant tranſcribers, of the *Old Martyrologys*, or were never heard of, but in the impudent legends of the *Breviary*. — Inſtances of this have been often aſſigned by Proteſtant writers. — Inſtances of perſons canonized who never lived *; of

* Mr. Addiſon in his Travels, and Dr. Middleton, from him, in his Letter from Rome, mention that the Mount *Soracte*, is now called the Mount St. *Oreſtes*, to which ſaint there is a convent dedicated, on the top of it. However, as two ſaints of the name of Oreſtes, whoſe feſtivals are on the 9th of November, and on the 13th of December, have a place not only in the Roman Martyrologys, but are alſo recorded in the Greek Menæon, as having ſuffered under Dioclefian, one in Armenia, and the other in Cappadocia, and as this latter Oreſtes is named expreſsly by Gregory Nazianzen in his oration on St. Baſil: from all theſe circumſtances, I ſhould think that, though Soracte be now corrupted into St. Oreſte, this cannot be urged as a proof that St. Oreſtes never exiſted. But many other inſtances of ſaints who never exiſted can be aſſigned. Not to inſiſt therefore on St. *Amphibolus* (St. Alban's cloak) or on St. *Veronica* (a handkerchief) ignorantly converted into perſons who, as they never were formally canonized, may perhaps be ſaid not to be venerated by the church of Rome, though

it is notorious they are venerated by the individuals of it; —I ſhall extract from the Martyrology publiſhed by Gregory the XVth, and confirmed as authentic, by a bull, inſtances which indiſputably prove my aſſertion, of non-entitys, or things tranſubſtantiated into perſons, and prayed to as ſaints.—In the front of the *Romish* calendar ſtands a ſaint *Almachius*, whoſe memory is ſolemnized on the 1ſt of January. If we conſider the univerſal ſilence of antiquity as to this perſon, and the perplexity Baronius is under about him, ſuppoſing him to be the ſame mentioned by Theodoret under the name of Telemachus; will it not be thought a very probable conjecture that, as St. Almachius is placed in the firſt line of the calendar, its title, St. *Almanacum*, *Sanctum Almanacum*, has been, by ſome ignorant monk in the dark ages, miſtaken for an ancient Saint? And it was eaſy to frame St. Almachius, of St. Almanacum, eſpecially, if we ſuppoſe it written in the old way of abbreviation.—If any one, in oppoſition to this conjecture, ſhould urge the word Almanacum to be modern, the anſwer is, that it is a word as old as Porphyry, as appears from a quotation of him by Euſebius.—P. Evan. L. 3. C. iv. But whatever be the fate of St. Almachius, whether a real ſaint or only an almanac; another inſtance of a non-entity converted into a ſaint, we have in Siridon, whoſe feſtival is on the 2d of January. Baronius in his note on this place, where we read *Sancti Siridonis Episcopi*, profeſſes himſelf entirely ignorant who this Siridon was, and where biſhop. And well he might; for Dr. Geddes tells us, that in ſome old MSS. of the Martyrology the true reading appears, and the martyr is found to be Domnus—Antiochiæ *Syriæ*,

Saints*; of Heretics miſtaken for otho-

Domni; theſe two laſt words being ſo corrupted as to form Siridon a perſon who never exiſted.—On the 16th of February we have *Sancti Juliani Martyris, cum aliis quinq; millibus.* In this place for five ſoldiers, *quinque militibus*, writ in abbreviation *Mil.* we now find *millibus.* But what is the multiplying five ſoldiers into five thouſand ſaints, when we can produce an inſtance of a ſpear metamorphoſed into a ſoldier? On the 15th of March is the feſtival of St. Longinus who pierced our Saviour's ſide. From the Greek word λόγχη, which ſignifies a ſpear, and uſed by St. John in the relating this fact, has been deduced the name of the ſoldier to whom it belonged, and the ſpear being once made a man, the man was eaſily made a ſaint. I ſhall give but one inſtance more, and as ſtrange as the laſt; of fourſcore and three miles, converted into ſo many martyrs. Under the 24th of July we read *Amiterni in Vestinis passio Sanctorum militum octaginta trium.* Now from the old MSS. Martyrologys it is evident we ought to read, *At Amiternum, 83 miles from Rome, of St. Victorinus:* the abbreviation of *Milliaria*, being miſtaken for *Milites*. Theſe inſtances are ſo flagrant that to mention more were ſuperfluous. Whoever would ſee more may meet with them in the Tracts of Dr. Geddes.

* Not to mention *Evodia* taken notice of by Mabillon in his *Itiner. Italicum*, nor St. *Viarius* whoſe miracles were famous all round Evora in Portugal, till Reſendius ſhewed that no ſuch perſon had ever exiſted, by reading the inſcription which referred to two heathens who had been appointed *Viarum Curandarum*, to repair the high-ways; which in-

dox *, and of moral and Chriſtian virtues, perſonified into martyrs and miracle-workers †. However as the ſcenes of the

ſcription, though very eaſy to be underſtood, was beyond the reach of Portugueſe prieſts. Not to mention theſe as inſtances, becauſe not countenanced by any public act of the church, the authentic Martyrology preſents us with a St. *Bacchus*, a St. *Quirinus*, a St. *Mercurius*, a St. *Romulus*, a St. *Nilammon*, a St. *Hippolitus*, &c. &c. all which favour much of a Pagan original. And, in particular, if we compare what the Romiſh church ſays of St. Hippolitus, with the fable of Ovid concerning the ſon of Theſeus, of the ſame name, it cannot be doubted that the one ſtory is a copy of the other. For as the Pagan Hippolitus was torn in ſunder by wild horſes, ſo, if we turn to the Martyrology, under the 13th of Auguſt, we read that the ſame fate attended the Chriſtian Martyr of that name. What ſtill confirms this, is the giving St. Hippolitus a nurſe; for the Martyrology, after relating his fate, addeth *passi sunt eodem Die, beata Concordia ejus Nutrix*, &c.—Every one knows what ſhare a nurſe had in the ſtory of Phædra and Hippolitus.

* Inſtances of heretics canonized, we have in Theodotus an Adrian, on the 2d of November; of Paphnutius a Mileſian heretic, on the 11th of September; of Felix a ſchiſmatic, on the 29th of July, &c. &c. &c.

† We read in the Martyrology on the 1ſt of Auguſt—"Romæ paſſio Sanctarum Virginum Fidei, Spei, & Chari-"tatis, quæ ſub Hadriano Principe, martyrii coronam "adeptæ ſunt." Now that there ſhould ever be three

Romiſh miracles are not altogether in *terra incognita.* I ſhall take particular notice of one or two of their moſt boaſted pretenſions, which may give you a ſpecimen of what you are to expect in moſt of the reſt. The inſtances I propoſe to mention, are the miracles aſcribed to the two famous heroes of the order of the *Jeſuits—Ignatius* the founder of their order, and *Francis Xavier,* their apoſtle in the *Eaſt Indies.*

Ignatius, according to *Bouhours, Maffei,* and ſeveral other writers of the order of

young women of the names of Faith, Hope, and Charity, or, if there were three ſuch young women, that they ſhould happen to ſuffer martyrdom together, muſt be owned to be highly improbable. And if we take it into conſideration that a day was ſet apart, in the old Pagan calendar of Rome, to Hope, this creates a ſtrong ſuſpicion, that theſe three are imaginary martyrs, and inſerted by way of accommodation to Pagan prejudices—a reſpect to which has been demonſtrated by Dr. Middleton, iu the Poſtſcript to his Letter from Rome, to have given riſe to the glaring Heatheniſm, as I may call it, of many rites and practices of the Romiſh church.

Jeſus (for above twenty of them have been his biographers) was not inferior to any of the ſaints, either for the number or the ſtrangeneſs of his miracles. But that theſe miracles were impudently forged, long after he was dead, by an order of men remarkable for their forgeries, and with the obvious intention of extending their own power, by exalting the reputation of their founder, will, I think, be pretty evident from the following particulars:

Ribadeneira, a *Spaniſh* jeſuit, was the firſt who undertook to give the world a life of this ſaint; and that he undertook it, with a view to exalt the character of the head of his order, we might have ſuppoſed, even although he had not told us ſo himſelf, when he ſays, that he was well qualified to write the hiſtory of *Ignatius*, having, from his youth, been an eye witneſs and admirer of his moſt holy life.*

* Cujus ego viri hiſtoriam quoniam a Puero ſanctiſſimæ ipſius vitæ ſpectator atque admirator fui, pleniorem & majori rerum fide ſcribere potero. Ribaden. in Præfat.

As, therefore, we cannot but ſuppoſe that *Ribadeneira*, a cotemporary, muſt have heard of *Ignatius*'s miracles, if any had been pretended to, ſo it cannot be doubted, that ſuch a biographer would have gladly laid hold of an opportunity of relating them; as the aſcribing of miracles to his hero, would have advanced his reputation more than any thing elſe that could be related of him.

Does then *Ribadeneira* aſcribe any miracles to *Ignatius?* So far is he from doing this, that we are certain, from his own declaration, not only that he himſelf did not believe his ſaint had ever performed miracles, but, farther, that this was a point univerſally known and agreed upon. For he enters upon an inquiry,* in his book, whence it could happen, that ſo holy a

* L. 5. C. xiii. p. 539. Sed dicat aliquis, ſi vera hæc ſunt, ut profecto ſunt, quid cauſæ eſt quamobrem illius ſanctitas minus eſt teſtata miraculis? & ut multorum ſanctorum vita, ſignis declarata, virtutumque operationibus illuſtrata,

man had not the gift of miracles beſtowed upon him; and the elaborate and ſenſible reaſons which he aſſigns for this*, are a

* The following ſpecimen of them deſerves our peruſal: Hæc dixerim non ut miraculorum vim elevem, ſed ut prudens lector intelligat, rem totam Deo committendam; qui dona ſua unicuique diſtribuit prout vult. Potuit ille pro ſua occultâ ſapientiâ, noſtræ hoc imbecillitati dare, ne miracula unquam jactare poſſemus. Potuit utilitati, ut authore inſtituti minus illuſtri, a Jeſu potius, quam ab illo, nomen traheremus & noſtra nos appellatio ſacra moneret, ne ab illo oculos unquam dimoveremus: quem non ſolum, ut communem humani generis liberatorem ac principem, ſed etiam ut præcipuum ducem colere, atque imitari debemus, minimam hanc ſocietatem ſui nominis glorioſo titulo decorantem. Potuit hoc etiam tribuere temporibus, quibus hæc miracula neceſſaria non ſunt. P. 542, 543.

The vein of humility which runs through this paſſage, agrees but very ill with the character and conduct of the Jeſuits, who have, ever ſince the foundation of their order given the world too many fatal proofs of their arrogance and ambition; and inſtead of endeavouring to deſerve the glorious appellation aſſumed by them, by a blind obſequiouſneſs to the pretenſions of the court of Rome, pretenſions inconſiſtent with the ſecurity and independency of the civil magiſtrate, and by their odious attempts to ſap the foundations of Chriſtian morality, have rendered the appellation of Jeſuit odious even among the moderate part of the church of Rome; and have made the penal laws of proteſtant ſtates, particularly of ours, againſt the religion they have pro a-

demonſtration that it was, at that time, looked upon as an indiſputed fact, that *Ignatius* had not been veſted with any ſuch power.

As *Ignatius* died in 1557, and as *Ribadeneira* did not publiſh his life till 1572, we may be certain that the miracles aſcribed to this Saint had not been invented or thought of during the firſt ſixteen years after his death. Nay, we are certain that they were not thought of during the firſt thirty years: for, in 1587, *Ribadeneira* publiſhed a ſecond edition of the life of *Ignatius;* and though, in this edition, he tells us* he has added many new particu-

gated by treaſons, aſſaſſinations, maſſacres, and villanies of every kind, to be acts neceſſary for our own preſervation, and not to be charged to a ſpirit of perſecution.

* Multa mihi neceſſario addenda judicavi. Primum nova quædam, quæ poſt libellum excuſum, graviſſimi viri, & Ignatio valde familiares, & ante ſocietatem conditam intimi neceſſarii, quaſi teſtes oculati de ipſo Ignatio nobis retulerunt. Tum alia, quæ dubia antea mihi erant, & diligenti poſtea inquiſitione inveſtigata, certa eſſe comperi. Ribaden. in Præf. Ed. 1587.

lars which he had learnt ſince he publiſhed the firſt, from ſome of *Ignatius*'s moſt intimate friends, and other matters, which before had appeared doubtful, but in conſequence of his diligent examination he now found to be certain; yet, after all this care and diligent inquiry, the miracles of *Ignatius* were ſtill unheard of by him, for this edition is as ſilent about them as was the firſt.

This then being the caſe, we may well be ſurprized, that this ſame *Ribadeneira* ſhould, in an abridgment of his work, printed at *Ipres*, in 1612, aſcribe miracles to *Ignatius;* telling us, as his reaſon for not inſerting ſuch accounts before, that though he had heard of them in 1572, they were not ſufficiently authenticated at that time*—But this excuſe cannot ſerve

* Quamvis enim anno 1572, primum vitam ejus latine ſcriberem alia nonnulla miracula ab eo facta noviſſem, tamen ad eo mihi certa & explorata non erant ut in vulgus edenda mihi perſuaderem; poſtea vero, quæſtionibus de ejus in divos relatione publice habitis, gravibus & idoneis teſtibus fuerunt comprobata. Cap. 18. P. 121. Edit. Ipren. 1612.

his purpoſe; for it requires more ſubtility than the moſt ſubtile *Jeſuit* is maſter of, to be able to reconcile his aſſerting that he had heard of *Ignatius*'s miracles in 1572, with his elaborate inquiry at that very time, into the reaſons why God had not veſted his Saint with ſuch a power.

From all theſe circumſtances, therefore, I think myſelf authorized to conclude, that the miracles of *Ignatius*, which, about the year 1612, were ſo boldly appealed to, were impudent forgeries then trumpt up, at the diſtance of above half a century from the age they pretend to, and when a detection of them was impoſſible to be ſet about. And why a power of miracles ſhould, at that time, be aſcribed to this Saint, is obvious. The *Jeſuits*, now that their founder had been dead almoſt ſixty years, began to think of getting him a place in the calendar:* and that their order might not be outdone by thoſe who could boaſt of a St. *Francis*, a St. *Bernard*,

* This was obtained of Pope Gregory the XVth, in 1622.

a St. *Benedict*, or a St. *Dominic*, they were reſolved to have a Saint *Ignatius* at their head. That no objection, therefore, might be made to his admiſſion into the venerable liſt of Demi-gods, it was thought neceſſary to do what other orders of religious had done before—to attribute to him a catalogue of miracles which, at ſuch a diſtance of time, could not be diſproved, and the evidence of which need be but ſlender to be allowed of by the church, or rather the court of *Rome*, whoſe power and grandeur are moſt effectually ſupported by its claim to miracles, under the ſanction of which it is enabled to exerciſe a boundleſs empire over the underſtandings of its votaries.*

* It may be obſerved in general, in the lives of the Romiſh ſaints, that the accounts of the miracles aſcribed to them, are uſually ſaid to be extracted out of the authentic certificates, &c. exhibited during the proceſs of their canonization. A moſt ſatisfying proof that they are forgeries of an age poſterior to that they lay claim to; as few or none of their ſaints are canonized till they have been ſo long dead, as to make it eaſy to attribute any wonders to them without fear of contradiction.

Leaving, therefore, our military ſaint, our knight-errant in devotion, to enjoy, as the reward of his fanaticiſm,* equal honors with his brethren the founders of other *orders*, ſuffer me, now, to take under my examination, the miracles aſcribed to *Francis Xavier*, which, as they have made as much noiſe as, perhaps, any boaſted of by papiſts, are very proper inſtances to illuſtrate my argument.

I have now before me two lives of this famous ſaint, written (as we may eaſily have ſuppoſed, though we had not known it) by two fathers of his own orders, by *Turſellinus* in *Latin*, and by *Bouhours* in *French*. But as the latter is little more than a tranſcript of the former, dreſſed out in a more elegant manner, I ſhall, in the

* For a view of Ignatius's character ſee *Stillingfleet's Fanaticism of the Church of Rome*—Mr. Wharton's *Enthuſiasm of the Church of Rome demonstrated*, in obſervations on the life of Ignatius—or Mr. *Bayle's Dictionary*, under the article Loyola; to which laſt author I own myſelf principally indebted for the remarks on this ſaint's miracles.

remarks which I make on theſe miracles, confine myſelf to the account given us of them by *Turſellinus*. And that *Xavier*'s miracles are inventions poſterior to his time, will appear from the following circumſtances:

Turſellinus in the preface prefixed to his firſt edition, laments that no one had ever thought of writing this ſaint's life till he had been dead thirty-five years. Before any credit can be given therefore to the miracles reported of *Xavier*, we muſt be ſatisfied that they were publicly known during the time intervening from his death: but ſo far is this from being the caſe, that we can produce, what I look upon as moſt concluſive evidence, that during that time *Xavier*'s miracles had not been heard of. The evidence I ſhall allege is of *Acoſta*, who himſelf had been a miſſionary among the *Indians*. His work *de procurandâ Indorum ſalute*, was printed in the year 1589, that is above thirty-ſeven years after the death of *Xavier*, and in

it we find an expreſs acknowledgment that no miracles had ever been performed by miſſionaries among the *Indians*. For he aſſigns it as one reaſon why the Goſpel was not propagated by them with the ſame ſucceſs as it was by the apoſtles. "That "the power of working miracles did not "ſubſiſt among the miſſionaries, who not "being able to excite the admiration or "the fear of the barbarians, by the majeſty "of any ſuch works, were, conſequently, "deſpiſed by reaſon of their mean ap-"pearance."*---Is it to be imagined that *Acoſta* would have reaſoned in this manner, if, at the time he wrote his book, the miracles related by *Turſellinus* had been aſcribed to *Xavier*? Had ſuch accounts been public, *Acoſta* could not but have heard of

* Altera cauſa in nobis eſt, cur apoſtolica prædicatio inſtitui omnino non poſſit apoſtolice, quod *miraculorum* nulla facultas ſit:--noſtri nunc temporis cum talium operum majeſtate ſeſe barbaris admirandos & timendos non præbeant, nihil reſtat niſi ut reliqua vitæ inopia & impotentia penitus contemnatur. B. 2. C. viii.

them, as he himſelf was a *Jeſuit*; and, therefore, from his ſilence, we may infer unexceptionably, that between thirty and forty years had elapſed before *Xavier's* miracles were thought of: or, which is equally ſubverſive of their credibility, if they were heard of within this period, that they met with no credit from one who cannot be ſuppoſed deficient either in opportunities of information, or in readineſs of believing them.

That the miracles aſcribed by *Turſellinus* to *Xavier* are poſterior to the age of *Xavier*, may be deduced ſtill more clearly from the teſtimony of the ſaint himſelf. The miſſion of this apoſtle laſted ten years; during which time he regularly correſponded with his friends, and the ſuperiors of his order in *Europe*. Theſe letters of his have been collected, and are now in the hands of the public. As they treat principally of his miſſion, of the progreſs he made, of the difficulties he had to ſtruggle with, and the means he

made uſe of to convert the *Indians*, it came, unavoidably, in his way, to mention his power of *working* miracles, if ever he had been veſted with ſuch a power. But ſo far is he from giving us the leaſt hint of this, that he mentions a circumſtance which is abſolutely inconſiſtent with the ſuppoſition. For, in many of his letters, he expreſſes himſelf greatly unable to do any good amongſt thoſe poor people, from his being ignorant of their languages, telling us that he had maſters to inſtruct him, and frankly owning that if he could not arrive at an acquaintance with them, he could do no ſervice to Chriſtianity *. From *Xavier* himſelf therefore, we are furniſhed not only with a negative evidence againſt his having any miraculous power, but alſo

* Among many other paſſages this may be quoted, Faxit Deus, ut ad divinarum explicationem rerum linguam condiſcamus quamprimum; tum demum aliquam Chriſtianæ rei navabimus operam. Nam nunc, quidem inter eos tanquam mutæ quædam ſtatuæ verſamur. Lib. 3. E. 5.

with a poſitive fact which is the ſtrongeſt poſſible preſumption againſt it. The end of his having a power of working miracles is ſuppoſed to be, that he might bring over the *Indians* to Chriſtianity. And yet we ſee that he himſelf expreſsly diſclaims all ſupernatural aſſiſtance in that very inſtance, in which it is reaſonable to believe Heaven would have aſſiſted him, had it interpoſed at all; and his not being aſſiſted in which, rendered all other miracles, though he had performed ever ſo many, of no effect. For unleſs he could draw conſequences from the miracles, unleſs he could explain himſelf to thoſe who were witneſſes of them, they would be as far from becoming Chriſtians as ever. The *Roman Catholics*, indeed, think they ſufficiently anſwer this argument drawn from the ſilence of *Xavier*, by aſcribing it to an exceſs of modeſty. But ſilence in *Xavier*, as to his miracles, would have been as criminal as it would be in a general who gains a victory, to make no mention of it to his prince; or as it would be

in an ambaſſador, to conceal the ſucceſs of his negociation from his conſtituent.

Another circumſtance which looks very ſuſpicious, is furniſhed by *Turſellinus* himſelf. In the preface to his ſecond edition he informs us, that, whereas in the firſt edition, he had been able to relate only thoſe acts of *Xavier*, which had been performed at the ſettlements of the *Portugueze*, his ſtock of materials had been ſo enlarged, that he was now enabled to relate the mighty deeds of his ſaint in other parts of *India* and in *Japan*. As, according to his own account, it was above thirty-five years after *Xavier's* death, before he ſet about writing his life, and as ſeveral years intervened between the firſt and ſecond edition of it, there can be but little credit due to thoſe ſupplemental materials (which contain the chief part of the wonders) whoſe exiſtence, previouſly to this ſecond edition, we have no evidence of, but the intereſted and conſequently ſuſpicious teſtimony of a *Jeſuit*, writing,

as he tells us, by the command of his ſuperiors, and with the profeſſed view of advancing the reputation of his newly-founded order.

Theſe circumſtances ſufficiently demonſtrate that the miracles aſcribed to *Francis Xavier*, cannot be traced up, by any proper evidence, to the age they lay claim to, and conſequently that they are to be rejected equally with thoſe of St. *Ignatius*, as labouring under the ſame defect.

But though the inſtances which I have aſſigned under this head (and many more, had it been neceſſary, could have been aſſigned) prove that ſome of the moſt boaſted accounts of *Pagan* and *Popiſh* miracles are poſterior to the age of the perſons to whom they are aſcribed;—there are, no doubt, many of theſe pretended miracles, the accounts of which are not liable to the above objection.—I proceed, therefore, to my *ſecond rule*, which will diveſt many of theſe pretenſions of their

credibility, which perhaps cannot be affected by the *firſt*.

The rule is this—Thoſe accounts of miracles are to be ſuſpected, which though they may be traced up to the age they lay claim to, have not been publiſhed in the places where it is pretended the facts have been wrought, but been reported only at a great diſtance from the ſuppoſed ſcene of action.

The grounds on which we ſuſpect ſuch accounts of miraculous facts to be falſe, are ſo obvious as to require no formal explanation. It will be ſufficient to obſerve, that when accounts of miracles are publiſhed at a diſtance from the places where the ſcenes of them are laid, they are publiſhed to perſons who, by their ſituation, are neceſſarily deprived of the proper means of examining what foundation there is for the pretenſions; and conſequently, in ſuch caſes, there is full ſcope for fraud and impoſition to play their

parts. With regard to reports of miracles, the very poſſibility of impoſition, creates a ſuſpicion of it; and to ſay that a miracle is ſuſpected, is, in other words, to ſay it is incredible.

Take then the *Romiſh* breviary, or the *lives of their Saints* into your hands, and you will perceive what ſtrange havoc will be made amongſt their moſt boaſted pretenſions to miracles when they are tried by this teſt. To deſcend to particulars on this head would be endleſs, and inſtances to confirm the truth of my obſervation are ſo numerous, that they are unneceſſary. Suffer me only to remark, that the miracles of *Francis Xavier* are as deficient in the qualifications required by the *ſecond* as they were ſhewn to be, in the qualifications required by the *firſt* rule. And, if they could have been traced up to the time when they are ſaid to have been wrought, their incredibility would nevertheleſs have been apparent from this circumſtance, that the accounts of them were

publiſhed at a vaſt diſtance from the ſuppoſed ſcene of the wonders.

For where did this ſaint diſplay his miraculous power?—In the extremities of the Eaſt, in *India*, in *Japan*. And where were the accounts of theſe facts made public; and by whom, if ever, believed? Not on the ſpot; but in *Europe*, at an immenſe diſtance, and conſequently propoſed to perſons unavoidably deprived of opportunities of coming at the truth, ſuppoſing them inclined to come at it; and liable to be impoſed upon by thoſe, whoſe private intereſts were connected with the propagation of an impoſture. For as it appears, from *Turſellinus*, the original biographer of *Xavier*, that he compoſed the life of this *Jeſuit*, by order of the ſuperiors of the *Jeſuits*, himſelf being of the ſame order; and as it is certain that the materials out of which he compoſed his work, were relations ſent home by *Jeſuits*, theſe circumſtances would have thrown a veil of ſuſpicion over this book, even al-

though the author had confined himſelf to exalt his hero's character, without going beyond the limits of nature. How greatly, therefore, does our ſuſpicion of fraud ſtrengthen itſelf, when we find that the facts reported are ſo extraordinary * ?

There is leſs occaſion to be very particular, under this head; becauſe I readily grant that inſtances of *Pagan* and *Popiſh* miracles may be appealed to, the accounts of which will ſtand the teſt of both the above-mentioned rules; and for the rejection of which, we can have no grounds

* The obſervation here made on the ſuſpicious teſtimony of the biographer of Francis Xavier, may be extended to the biographers of all the wonder-workers of the church of Rome. Every *order* is concerned about its own heroes; the other St. Francis, St. Dominic, St. Benedict, St. Bernard, St. Philip Neri Founder of the Oratory, *&c. &c.* have reſpectively been indebted for their lives and miracles, to writers of the orders founded by themſelves. And each of theſe writers ſeems to have ſet out with this capital point in view, to repreſent the ſaint of his order as having performed works ſtranger than any of his brother ſaints can boaſt of, regardleſs of truth, nay vying with each other, who ſhall aſſert the moſt impudent falſehoods.

to urge either that length of time, or that diſtance of place favoured the impoſture.

What then are we to ſay with regard to ſuch accounts, which we cannot deny to have been made public at the very times *when*, and at the very places *where* ſaid to be performed? We reject them, it is true, equally with the reſt: But what are our grounds for doing ſo, as thoſe aſſigned for rejecting the accounts of the miracles already examined, are inſufficient? Theſe grounds, then, I now proceed to ſet forth by laying it down as a

Third rule, that ſuppoſing accounts of miracles to have *both* the foregoing qualifications we ſtill may ſuſpect them to be falſe, if in the time, and at the place they took their riſe they might be ſuffered to paſs without examination.

It can ſcarcely be neceſſary to premiſe, that I mean not under this head, to comprehend *all* accounts of miracles which

can be traced up to contemporary witneſſes, and were publiſhed on the ſpot. Some of theſe are of ſuch a nature as to merit no notice. For inſtance, when the reporters of miracles content themſelves with general aſſertions, and vague claims to a miraculous power, without ever attempting to corroborate them by deſcending to particular facts; and leave us *ſtrangely in the dark* as to the perſons by *whom*, the witneſſes before *whom*, and the objects upon *whom* theſe miraculous powers are ſaid to be exerciſed, omitting every circumſtance neceſſary to be related by them before any enquiry can be made into the truth of the pretenſion; when miracles, I ſay, are reported in this unſatisfactory manner (and inſtances of miracles reported on the ſpot by contemporary writers, in ſuch a manner, might be mentioned) in this caſe it would be the height of credulity to pay any regard to them in a *diſtant age*, becauſe no regard could poſſibly be paid to them in *their own*.

It will be equally foreign to our purpoſe, to take any notice of ſuch accounts of miracles, which, if related on the ſpot with all their circumſtances, we are certain, never impoſed upon any body, but, from their firſt publication, were exploded as forgeries, and were univerſally diſregarded as ſuch. For your prejudices againſt miracles do not ariſe from attempts to impoſe upon the world, in this way, but from the ſucceſs of ſuch attempts—not from ſpurious miracles being detected, but from their having paſſed current without detection.

Setting theſe aſide, then, as unworthy of our attention, the accounts of miracles proper to be examined under this head, are ſuch as were publiſhed with all the neceſſary means of inquiring into the truth of the pretenſions, and were not exploded as forgeries at their firſt publication, but admitted to be true by vaſt numbers of people to whom they were propoſed.

I lay it down as a principle not to be controverted, that in order to our having an unexceptionable teſtimony for miracles, we muſt not only be able to trace the accounts of them up to the times when, and to the places where, they are ſaid to be performed; but, farther, we muſt have an aſſurance from the circumſtances attending their publication, that their pretenſions were really examined into before they met with any credit.

It cannot, ſurely, be neceſſary to illuſtrate the reaſonableneſs of this aſſertion. —When the truth of a common matter of fact is admitted blindly, without any previous examination into the teſtimony ſupporting it, a door is opened to endleſs impoſitions. Much more, is ſuch a previous examination neceſſary, before we can be warranted to admit the truth of miraculous facts. For, if the circumſtances, under which they have been publiſhed, give us an aſſurance that they eſcaped a detection not from *ſtrength of*

evidence, but from *want of examination,* in this caſe, the accounts of them are as ſuſpicious as if length of time, or diſtance of place had rendered an examination impoſſible, by throwing a veil over the impoſture. A miracle, the evidence of which *was* not enquired into by thoſe to whom it was firſt propoſed, ought to be rejected equally with a miracle, the evidence of which *could* not be enquired into.

Accounts of miracles may well be ſuppoſed to have paſſed without examination; firſt, where the miracles propoſed, coincided with the favourite opinions, or prejudices of thoſe to whom they were reported, and who, on that account, might be eager to receive them unexamined: Secondly where the accounts were ſet on foot, at leaſt were encouraged and ſupported, by thoſe who alone had the power of detecting the fraud, and could prevent any examination which might tend to undeceive the world.

I think I may ſafely challenge you to produce from ancient hiſtory, or from the more modern relators of wonders amongſt *Papiſts*, any particular miracle, which, if it can be traced up to contemporary witneſſes, and was publiſhed on the ſpot, will not be inſtantly obſerved to labour under one or other, or both, of the above-mentioned defects. We ſhall ever find the people refuſing any examination of the miracle, through a blind credulity and eagerneſs of belief, or the promoters of it armed with power rendering an examination impoſſible.

Take your *Livy* into your hands, and you will find this to be remarkably the caſe of the prodigies, with which his hiſtory ſo abounds. In taking notice of a long ſtring of ridiculous ſtories, publiſhed in the fifth year of the ſecond *Punic* war (amongſt which we meet with an ox ſpeaking, with a child calling out of its mother's womb, *Io triumphe!* with a woman changed into a man, and other

equally curious facts) he * expreſsly tells us that ſuch ſtories were multiplied in proportion to the credulous and ſuperſtitious diſpoſition of thoſe who believed them. No nation perhaps, ever was ſo ſuperſtitious as the *Romans*, eſpecially during the times of their republic: and this ſuperſtition was made uſe of, by thoſe in authority, ſo as to become publicly beneficial in caſes of emergency. Hence the numerous and frequently repeated reports of wonders and prodigies, which the credulous and ſuperſtitious people believing without any examination, they were, by an artful management, kept in ſuch a diſpoſition of mind, as was ſuited to the ſtate of public affairs. Accordingly we find in *Livy*, that when the above-mentioned prodigies were reported, the *conſuls* conſulted the *haruſpices*, whoſe anſwer was, that theſe prodigies ſhould be

* Prodigia eo anno multa nunciata ſunt; quæ quo magis credebant ſimplices ac religioſi homines, eo etiam plura nunciabantur. Livy, B. 24. C. x.

taken care of by greater ſacrifices, and by offering up prayers at the ſhrines of all the gods. And there ſeems particular reaſons why, at that juncture, it ſhould be thought convenient to alarm the minds of the people with reports of this kind. For *Livy* tells us * that, this year, ſix new legions were to be raiſed; and nothing could be more proper to engage the people to enliſt, willingly, than to propagate reports, the belief of which, by awakening their ſuperſtitious fears of Heaven, diſpoſed them to obedience to the magiſtrate.

Amongſt all the accounts of miracles, to be met with in the old *Roman* hiſtory, the appearance of *Caſtor* and *Pollux* in the battle at the lake *Regillus*, has been moſt frequently made uſe of in our controverſies on miracles. "In the early times of "the republic, in the war with the *Latins*, "the gods, *Caſtor* and *Pollux*, are ſaid to "have appeared on white horſes in the

* Ib. Ch. xi.

" *Roman* army, which, by their aſſiſtance,
" gained a complete victory; in memory
" of which the general *Poſthumius* vowed
" and built a temple publicly to thoſe
" deities, and for a proof of the fact there
" was ſhewn in *Cicero's* time, the mark of
" the horſes' hoofs on a rock at *Regillus*,
" where they firſt appeared. Now this
" miracle, with many others of the ſame
" kind, hath, I dare ſay, as authentic an
" atteſtation, as any which the Papiſts can
" produce: the decree of a ſenate to con-
" firm it; a temple erected in conſequence
" of it, viſible marks of the fact on the
" ſpot where it was tranſacted; and all
" this ſupported by the concurrent teſti-
" mony of the beſt authors of antiquity,
" amongſt whom *Dionyſius* of *Halicar-*
" *naſſus*, ſays that there were ſubſiſting in
" his time at *Rome* many evident proofs of
" its reality, beſides a yearly feſtival with
" a ſolemn ſacrifice, and proceſſion in me-
" mory of it." Thus far Dr. *Middleton**:

* Letter from Rome, p. 194, 195.

But this miracle with all its ſplendid appearances of genuineneſs, will not ſtand the teſt of the rule laſt laid down. The nature of the caſe ſuggeſts to us ſtrong ſuſpicions, that the whole was the fiction of a politic general to inſpire confidence into his army. The fraud, from the very complexion of it, could not poſſibly be detected. For in the confuſion of a battle, at which time a *panic* is infuſed ſo eaſily, a report of a different kind, that will inſpire confidence, will get credit as eaſily; when every one is ſo buſy as not to be allowed time to examine what foundation there is for it. It depended entirely on *Poſthumius* himſelf to make his ſtory paſs current, eſpecially amongſt perſons previouſly inclined to believe ſtories of miracles and prodigies, on the ſlighteſt grounds. If he publiſhed it confidently, as it appears, from his vowing and building a temple, he did, others, even though they had not been as ready to believe as he to publiſh, durſt not have entered into any examination of particulars to detect the

fiction, even though an examination of particulars had been poſſible. Thus cheriſhed, therefore, in its infancy, by the chief magiſtrate of the common-wealth, no wonder that this pretended appearance of the twin brothers ſhould gain preſent credit, and be handed down to poſterity, commemorated by proceſſions and feſtivals *.

The ſame way of reaſoning will overturn the credibility of the miraculous cures attributed to *Veſpaſian*. The author of the *Eſſay on Miracles*, ſpeaks of them in the following manner: "One of the beſt "atteſted miracles in all profane hiſtory

* Dr. Middleton in his Letter from Rome, p. 195, obſerves, that the Papiſts have copied from this appearance of Caſtor and Pollux on white horſes, their ſtory of St. George, and two other ſaints, not only on white horſes but at the head of white armies, in the holy war. Frequent appearances of St. James the Patron of Spain, alſo on a white horſe, in the battles of that nation againſt the Saracens, are related by all their hiſtorians, and ſeem humble imitations, though perhaps uſeful ones, of the Pagan original.

" is that which *Tacitus* reports of *Veſpa-*
" *ſian*, who cured a blind man in *Alexan-*
" *dria* by means of his ſpittle, and a lame
" man by the mere touch of his foot, in
" obedience to a viſion of the god *Serapis*,
" who had enjoined them to have recourſe
" to the emperor for their miraculous and
" extraordinary cures. The ſtory may
" be ſeen in that fine hiſtorian, where
" every circumſtance ſeems to add weight
" to the teſtimony, and might be diſplayed
" at large, with all the force of argument
" and eloquence, if any one were now con-
" cerned to enforce the evidence of that
" exploded and idolatrous ſuperſtition.
" The gravity, ſolidity, age and probity of
" ſo great an emperor, who, through the
" whole courſe of his life, converſed in a fa-
" miliar way with his friends and courtiers,
" and never affected thoſe extraordinary
" airs of divinity aſſumed by *Alexander*
" and *Demetrius*. The hiſtorian, a con-
" temporary writer noted for candour, and
" veracity, and withal the greateſt and
" moſt penetrating genius perhaps of all

" antiquity, and ſo free from every tenden-
" cy to ſuperſtition and credulity, that he
" even lies under the contrary imputation
" of atheiſm and profaneneſs; the perſons
" from whoſe teſtimony he related the mi-
" racle, of eſtabliſhed character for judg-
" ment and veracity, as we may well
" ſuppoſe, eye-witneſſes of the facts, and
" confirming their verdict after the *Fla-*
" *vian* family, were deſpoiled of the empire,
" and could no longer give any reward as
" the price of a lie--*utrumque, qui interfuere,*
" *nunc quoque memorant, poſtquam nullum*
" *mendaciis pretium.* To which if we add
" the public nature of the fact as related,
" it will appear that no evidence can well
" be ſuppoſed ſtronger for ſo groſs and ſo
" palpable a falſehood*."

It ſeems to me that the ingenious eſſay writer, in the above quotation, confounds two things very different from each other —The evidence that this tranſaction hap-

* Eſſay on Miracles, p. 192, 193.

pened, and the evidence that there was any thing ſupernatural performed. The circumſtances which he expatiates ſo much upon, the character of the emperor, the veracity of *Tacitus*, the teſtimony of eye-witneſſes, and the public nature of the facts do, indeed, prove unexceptionably, that the two men in queſtion did apply to *Veſpaſian*, in the manner related *. But

* For the ſatisfaction of the reader I have ſubjoined Tacitus's account of this matter. Per eos menſes quibus Veſpaſianus Alexandriæ ſtatos æſtivis flatibus dies, & certa maris opperiebatur, multa miracula evenere, *quis cæleſtis favor, & quædam in Veſpaſianum inclinatio numinum oſtenderetur*. Ex plebe Alexandrinâ quidam oculorum tabe notus, genua ejus advolvitur, remedium cæcitatis expoſcens gemitu, monitu Serapidis Dei; quem dedita ſuperſtitionibus gens ante alios colit: precabaturque principem, *ut genas*, et *oculorum orbes dignaretur reſpergere oris excremento*. Alius manu æger eodem Deo auctore, ut pede ac veſtigio Cæſaris calcaretur, orabat. Veſpaſianus primo irridere, aſpernari, atque, illis inſtantibus, modo Famam vanitatis metuere; modo obſecratione ipſorum, & *vocibus adulantium* in ſpem induci, poſtremo æſtimari a medicis jubet, an talis cæcitas, ac debilitas, ope humana ſuperabiles forent. Medici varie diſſerere; *huic non exeſam vim luminis, & redituram ſi pellerentur obſtantia; illi elapſos in pravumartus, ſi ſalubris vis adhibeatur, poſſe integrari. Id fortaſſe cordi*

that there was any truth either in the viſion of the god *Serapis*, or in the cures pretended to, we are ſo far from having the ſtrongeſt evidence, that no evidence can well be ſuppoſed weaker.

It is certain in the firſt place, that both the complaints ſaid to be cured, could eaſily have been counterfeited *. The

deis & divino miniſterio principem electum. Denique patrati remedii gloriam penes Cæſarem; irriti ladibrium penes miſeros fore. Igitur Veſpaſianus cuncta fortunæ ſuæ patere ratus, nec quidquam ultra incredibile, læto ipſe vultu, erecta, quæ aſtabat, multitudine, juſſa exſequitur. Statim converſa ad uſum manus, ac cæco reluxit dies.---Utrumque qui interfuere nunc quoque memorant, poſtquam mullum mendacio pretium. Tacitus Hiſt. Lib. 4.

* The report of the phyſicians, as Tacitus relates it, confirms this. According to them, *the blind man's organs of viſion were not deſtroyed, and that his ſight might be reſtored on the removal of ſome obſtacle.* But what this obſtacle was, and whether there was any obſtacle but what the patient could create or remove himſelf, is not mentioned.--- Equally ambiguous doth their report repreſent the caſe of the lame man to be---for they tell us *that the diſorder was in the joints, and might be remedied by the application of a healing power.* Now, ſuch a lameneſs has ſeldom any ex-

lame and blind who infeſt our ſtreets, can ſee, and uſe their decrepid arms or legs, when the buſineſs of the day is over. Cures, therefore, may in ſuch caſes be pretended to be performed, while the ſpectators are the dupes of a concerted ſcene of impoſture. The lame need only move that member which, before, he did not uſe, and the blind open his contracted eyelids, and the work is done. To have recourſe therefore to a ſupernatural interpoſition, in this caſe, when the whole tranſaction can be ſo eaſily accounted for by ſuppoſing a colluſion to ſubſiſt, between the men who were to pretend a cure, and the emperor, or at leaſt his courtiers, would be highly ſuperſtitious. But the poſſibility of there being ſuch a colluſion, is not all that we have to urge; for the relation of theſe pretended miracles, as given us by *Tacitus*, ſuggeſts ſtrong ſuſpicions that ſuch a colluſion ac-

ternal marks of it diſcernible by the eye: ſo that here alſo, there was wide ſcope for impoſture.

tually ſubſiſted. The eagerneſs of *Veſpaſian's* courtiers preſſing him to make trial of his healing power, and particularly of his phyſicians, who flattered him with a compliment of his being, perhaps, choſen by the gods as their inſtrument in this affair; theſe circumſtances, added to this conſideration that the whole tranſaction was calculated to do honour to the emperor, and to add luſtre to his imperial dignity lately aſſumed, authorize us ſufficiently in our ſuſpicions of fraud.—And when we conſider, that the ſuperſtitious *Alexandrians*, who were the perſons immediately impoſed upon, would eagerly believe miracles aſcribed to *Serapis*, the god whom, we learn from *Tacitus*, they honoured before all others; and at the ſame time, obſerve that they who had all the means of detection, were the contrivers and actors of the fraud, we ſhall then be warranted to conclude, that *Veſpaſian's* pretended miracles were not *examined*, in the time and at the place where they were publiſhed, and that therefore they will

not bear to be tried by the rule I laſt laid down *.

* It cannot be thought I go out of my way, when I take notice here of a remarkable inſtance of the incorrectneſs, not to ſay of the unfairneſs of Dr. *Middleton*, whoſe abilities as a writer, however admired, can never atone for thoſe deviations from truth, with which, eſpecially in his quotations, he has been ſo frequently charged. In his *Free Inquiry*, p. 171, ſpeaking of the miracles in queſtion, he ſays. "The ſame writers (Suetonius and Tacitus) alſo "declare that this good emperor by a divine admonition "from the god Serapis, publicly reſtored a blind man to "his ſight," *&c. &c.*—Now would not one who reads this, imagine that the divine admonition, mentioned by the two hiſtorians, was pretended to be made to Veſpaſian himſelf? —The Doctor's words can bear no other meaning; and yet it is told us, as plainly as could be, both by Tacitus and by Suetonius, that the admonition was pretended to, by the men themſelves, who were to be cured. Tacitus's words I have already quoted, and Suetonius's account is as follows. E plebe quidam luminibus orbatus, item alius debili crure, ſedentem pro tribunali pariter adierunt, orantes opem valetudinis demonſtratam a Serapide per quietem.--- I ſhall only obſerve that if the author of the Eſſay on Miracles had read Tacitus and Suetonius, as miſinterpreted, or rather miſrepreſented, by Dr. Middleton, he might have pledged the veracity of Veſpaſian himſelf for the truth of this viſion from the god Serapis, for which, at preſent, no other evidence can be alleged, but the affirmation of two unnamed wretches from the dregs of the people, fit tools to be employed in acting a part in an impoſture.

I ſhall only add, that the manner in which, as *Tacitus* relates, one of theſe pretended cures was performed by *Veſpaſian*, ſo exactly reſembles that which *St.* * *John* informs us our Saviour adopted in the cure of the man born blind, as to afford a fair preſumption, that the contrivers of the *Pagan* impoſture having it in their view to check the rapid progreſs of Chriſtianity, produced by an appeal to the miracles of its great founder, fabricated ſimilar powers for their emperors:—And it is very remarkable, that this honour was alſo conferred on *Adrian*, another of them, who is repreſented as having cured blindneſs by the ſame mode of operation.

The ſame inſufficiency of evidence which deſtroys the credibility of the *Pagan* miracles above-mentioned, equally affects the credibility of ſuch of the *Popiſh* ones that can be traced up to the times when they were ſaid to be performed, and were

* John 9, p. 6.

publiſhed on the ſpot. For, on trying them, as I have done the former, by the teſt of the third rule laid down by me, we ſhall invariably find, that the circumſtances attending them are ſuch as muſt ſatisfy us that the evidences on which they were ſupported, had this moſt capital defect of having never been carefully examined, as the means of removing the ſuſpicion of fraud being practiſed on the credulous believers.

What then hath been the nature and tendency of the miracles that have at any time been appealed to by the *Papiſts?* They were always invented to propagate the belief of certain rites and doctrines, and practices, which had crept into the church; to advance the reputation of ſome particular chapel *;

* One of the moſt boaſted miracles amongſt Papiſts is the tranſportation of the *Virgin Mary's* houſe from Paleſtine, firſt into Dalmatia, and then after ſeveral changes of ſituation, to Loretto in the Pope's dominions. A ſtory, which, from the amazing riches heaped up in the treaſury of the

image †; or order * of religious; or to

church built over the Holy houſe, the preſents of votaries who croud from every part of Europe to Loretto, appears to have anſwered the deſigned end, though it be ſo big with abſurdities, and the impoſture be ſo glaring, that one could ſcarcely ſuppoſe it poſſible that the moſt lamentable ignorance, and the moſt ſtupid credulity, could believe it. Turſellinus, the ſame who diſplayed his talents in celebrating Francis Xavier, his beſtowed a book on the *wonderful migrations of the Holy houſe.*

† The gain ariſing to the poſſeſſors of an image which has a reputation of working miracles, has contributed wonderfully to enlarge the catalogue of ſuch boaſted facts. The miraculous images of the bleſſed Virgin are moſt frequent. Amongſt many others, our lady of Atocha, near Madrid; our lady of Montſerrat in Catalonia; our lady of Saragoſſa; and our lady of Halle in Brabant, are remarkable. The laſt mentioned image performs daily, ſo many miracles, that the printed liſt of them is greatly augmented, from time to time, and now is ſwelled to a large pamphlet. Nay, whoever viſits her church at Halle, may ſee a *ſtanding miracle* with his own eyes. There is placed in a corner, a heap of ſtone bullets, which, as the infallible legend ſets forth, being fired into the town when it was beſieged by the Saracens (no matter in what age or year) the Virgin left her place in the church, walked the ramparts, and having caught the bullets in her lap, depoſited them where they now lie. Should you diſbelieve this, you will be told as a proof of its being true, that, if you attempt to count theſe bullets, you cannot reckon the ſame number twice, and

countenance opinions either ſuch as were†

that if two perſons count, at the ſame time, they cannot agree in their report. That it ſhould be difficult to reckon, merely by the eye (for you are debarred touching, by the interpoſition of iron bars) between thirty and forty bullets heaped one upon another, is eaſy to be imagined. But that there is any thing ſupernatural in this, I ſhould have ſcarcely thought there could be any body ſo credulous as to believe, had I not been upon the ſpot, and met with ſuch believers.

* The miracles of monks and friars, calculated to promote the intereſts of monkery in general, and of the reſpective orders of religious in particular, are equally numerous as they are ſilly and ridiculous. For a ſpecimen of them, the reader may peruſe Dr. *Geddes*'s View of all the Orders of the Monks and Friars in the Roman Church, with an Account of their Founders, &c. in the 3d vol. of his Miſcellaneous Tracts.

† Of this kind are the miracles of the *Dominicans* againſt the *immaculate conception* of the bleſſed Virgin, and the miracles of the *Franciſcans* for this tenet, the former liſted under the banner of Thomas Aquinas, the latter under that of Duns Scotus. A very remarkable ſcene of forgery detected amongſt the Dominicans in a convent at Berne, 1057, may be met with in *Burnet's Travels*, from p. 31, to p. 41. It is an obſervation which I believe upon examination will be found to hold good, that whenever any pretences to miracles have been detected, by thoſe who are in power, amongſt the Papiſts, theſe have always been facts

conteſted amongſt themſelves, or

alleged in confirmation of doctrines about which Papiſts themſelves have been divided, and the belief of which has not been calculated ſo much to be beneficial to the Holy church in general, as to ſerve the intereſted views of jarring eccleſiaſtics. This has ariſen from the following reaſon. When a miracle pretended to, was of ſuch a nature as to confirm a doctrine, in the belief of which *all* the orders of eccleſiaſtics, that is, all the ruling part of the church, equally concurred and were equally intereſted, in this caſe, it is eaſy to conceive that *all* would join in a confederacy to propagate the fact among their credulous votaries. But when a miracle has been alledged by *one* order of eccleſiaſtics to confirm a doctrine admitted by them, but oppoſed by other orders, in this caſe, as there was an oppoſition of intereſts there could be no general confederacy. The rulers of the church being divided among themſelves, they were ſpies on each other; and being bound in honour to ſupport the doctrines of their reſpective parties, no pains were ſpared to examine into the miracles appealed to, by their antagoniſts; which, of courſe, has produced many detections of groſs impoſtures, and particularly, occaſioned the detection and puniſhment of the actors in the ſcene of villainy at Berne. A very ſimilar inſtance of impoſture, attempted by the Franciſcans at Orleans, in 1534 was detected and puniſhed by baniſhing the contrivers. This pretended miracle not having any reference to the general intereſts of the church, the civil magiſtrate's interference was readily obtained, and eaſily became effectual. See *Gaillard's* Life of *Francis 1.* vol. 6. p. 460. to 466.

ſuch * as the whole church did teach and require as points of faith. To deſcend

* The confirmation of relique and ſaint worſhip has been a fruitful ſource of miracles, from the fourth or fifth century downwards. The more modern corruptions of image worſhip, purgatory and tranſubſtantiation, have had their truth atteſted by a variety of wonderful viſions, revelations, and prodigies. Tranſubſtantiation, in particular, has been often proved by the ſpringing out of blood from the conſecrated wafers. One of the moſt remarkable ſtories of this kind, is ſaid to have happened at Bruſſels in 1369. Some Jews having ſtolen ſeveral conſecrated hoſts out of a church, in contempt of the god ſuppoſed to be preſent under the form of bread, run their knives into them, and inſtantly there ſtreamed out great quantities of blood. Three of theſe wafers, no doubt the identical ones pierced by the Jews, are ſtill preſerved in St. Gudule's church at Bruſſels, where I have ſeen them, they being expoſed with great pomp to public view, during the octave of an annual feſtival. For an account of this miracle, ſee *Delices de Pais Bas*, v. 1. p. 121, 122, 123; ſee alſo *Deſcription de Bruxelles*, p. 74, and 75.—A miracle, ſimilar to this, is related in the *Memoirs of Brandenburgh* at the year 1279, where blood is ſaid to have boiled up through the ground, from a conſecrated hoſt buried at Belitz. " Les Vierges miracu-
" leuſes, les images ſecourables, & les reliques des ſaints
" avoient alors une vertu toute ſinguliere. Le Sang de
" Belitz entr'autres étoit fort renommé. Voici ce qui
" c'étoit. Une cabaretiere de cette ville vola une hoſtie
" conſacrée & l'enterra ſous un tonneau dans ſa cave,

to particular inſtances would in a great meaſure be unneceſſary, becauſe the account which I here give of theſe pretended miracles is, on all hands, agreed to be the true one. The few particulars mentioned at the bottom of the page, may ſerve, by way of illuſtration.

Such then being the nature and genius of the pretended miracles of the church of

" pour avoir meilleur debit de ſa bierre: Elle en eut des " remords elle denonça ſon crime au curé, qui vint en pro- " ceſſion avec tout ſon attirail pontifical pour deterrer " l'hoſtie. En enfonçant la pelle en terre on vit bouillon- " ner du ſang, & tout le monde cria au miracle. L'impoſ- " ture étoit trop groſſiere, & l'on ſcait que c'étoit du ſang " de bœuf, que la cabaretiere avoit verſé. Ces miracles " ne laiſſoient pas que de faire impreſſion ſur l'eſprit des " peuples." M. de Brandenburgh, p. 265. The obſervation of the *Royal Memoir Writer* that ſuch miracles, though they bore viſible marks of impoſture, failed not to make impreſſions on the minds of the people, is founded on this truth, that where there is a previous diſpoſition to believe, no impoſture will be too groſs to be admitted, eſpecially when the impoſtures are of ſuch a kind as to be countenanced by thoſe whoſe empire over the underſtandings of the people is boundleſs.

Rome, facts coinciding with the favourite opinions, and superstitious prejudices, of those to whom they were proposed; that the reports and accounts of them should undergo any strict examination, at the time of their being published, will appear highly improbable, when we consider, what certainly has always been the case, that the persons with whom such reports have gained any credit, had been trained up from their infancy in a persuasion that miraculous powers are continued in their church. A previous dispositon of this kind, to admit miracles in general, a credulity and superstition thus ready to embrace every strange story, will naturally incline persons of this character to believe, without scrutiny, those particular miracles proposed to them, which are so framed as to be agreeable to their favourite sentiments. Nothing will be too wonderful to pass current, if it be connected with their religious opinions. This circumstance alone will reconcile all difficulties, remove all doubts, and secure, from being formally

detected, ſtories which ſeem induſtriouſly to have been made up of the wildeſt inconſiſtencies, and ſtrangeſt improbabilities, as experiments how far the credulity of the multitude may be wrought upon with ſucceſs.

And this leads me naturally to obſerve that, as the *Popiſh* miracles have always been propoſed to thoſe whoſe ſuperſtition and prejudices previouſly diſpoſed them to believe without examination, the credibility of theſe boaſted wonders will become ſtill more ſuſpicious, if we add another circumſtance—That they have always been ſet on foot, at leaſt have always been encouraged and ſupported, by thoſe who, by their influence and power, could prevent any examination which might tend to undeceive the world. —They have been the arts of the powerful *few*, to keep in awe the ignorant *many*, the forgeries of the rulers of the church, to countenance the corruptions with which they have diſgraced the church; to add a

ſanction to doctrines and practices viſibly calculated to extend their own influence, to add to their own riches, and to give themſelves an unlimited command over their fellow-Chriſtians, though at the expence of their common Chriſtianity.

This then being the caſe, it would have been next to impoſſible to have ſet about an examination of theſe pretences to miracles. For were we even to allow, that thoſe to whom they were propoſed, had the beſt inclination in the world not to believe but upon proper evidence, the danger which muſt attend their giving any ſigns of this inclination, would deter every one in his ſenſes from attempting a detection. He who would ſet himſelf up to oppoſe a fraud ſupported by the authority and influence of the rulers of the church in a country where, in matters of religion, the civil magiſtrate is guided by the prieſt, would ſoon find reaſon to repent of his temerity.

Can there therefore, be any heſitation in refuſing to admit the truth of miraculous facts backed and ſupported by thoſe who alone had the means of detecting the fraud, if there was any; and who having the ſword in their own hands, would never point it againſt themſelves, to puniſh their own impoſtures?*

* The author of the *Eſſay on Miracles*, p. 193, has thought proper to expatiate on the ſtory related by the *cardinal de Retz*, of a door-keeper of the cathedral at Saragoſſa who recovered a loſt leg, by rubbing the ſtump of it with the holy oil. He ſets off the evidence of this miracle to the greateſt advantage, as atteſted by a contemporary writer, a perſon of eminence, and of a libertine and unbelieving character; and the fact of ſuch a nature that there could be no ambiguity about it, and ſo public as to be known to all the inhabitants of Saragoſſa. But it is obvious that the evidence of this miracle labours under both the defects juſt mentioned. There was here, on the one hand, the power and influence of the clergy, particularly the canons of the church (who are the perſons quoted by the Cardinal as his witneſſes) aſſerting and ſupporting a ſtory the belief of which, by increaſing the veneration for the miraculous image of the Virgin which is in their church (to which image the holy oil no doubt, owed its efficacy) would be a ſure means of increaſing the wealth of their

Having employed more attention than perhaps was neceſſary, on the extraordina-

community. And on the other hand, there was the blind credulity of the ſuperſtitious inhabitants of *Saragoſſa*, bred up from their infancy with a perſuaſion that miracles were performed by the church, zealouſly devoted to the worſhip of the Bleſſed Virgin, and eager to embrace without examination, whatever might do honour to the image of her, which is thought the glory of their city.—There is a ſtory in *Carte's Life of the Duke of Ormonde*, which I ſhall here quote, as it ſhews us how little regard ought to be paid to miracles publiſhed amongſt thoſe who are previouſly diſpoſed to believe ſuch ſtories, and where there is power and influence acting upon ſuperſtition and credulity. "Whilſt he (the Marquis of Ormonde) was there (at Ly-"ons) he called at a ſhop to have his peruke mended. "The maſter was a cripple, both in his hands and feet, but "ſaid he would direct his ſiſter to mend it as it ought to be. "The Marquis taking another peruke from him, went to "gaze about the ſtreets, and ſtepping accidentally into the "next church, he ſaw a chapel in it, which was hung with "the preſents of ſeveral votaries who had received cures "from our lady. Among the reſt he obſerved an inſcrip-"tion as well as offering, made by the very man he had "left. When he came back to the peruke-maker, he aſked "him about it, wondering he ſhould do ſo, being ſtill decre-"pid. The man anſwered, that he thought that he was "rather better than he had been, and hoped that by doing "honour to the lady before hand, he might the ſooner "enjoy the reſt of her benefit." *Carte*, vol. 2d. p. 180.

ry works, which gentlemen of your way of thinking have uſually put upon the ſame footing of credibility with the Goſpel miracles, though the manifeſt fabrications of impoſture, I now proceed to take into conſideration another claſs of them—Works, really performed, but which required no miraculous interpoſition, being brought about by the operation of cauſes merely natural.

Many inſtances of this kind might be aſſigned, but I ſhall, in a great meaſure, confine myſelf to one ſingle inſtance, as moſt to my purpoſe of all others, becauſe moſt inſiſted upon by my antagoniſts,—an inſtance which has been a favourite topic in all the late debates concerning miracles, and which has furniſhed you and your friends with matter of triumph, as if the objections drawn from it were

ad. An. 1658. Is it to be imagined that this fellow would have ventured to aſſert this glaring falſehood, in ſo awful a manner, had he not known that any thing would paſs unnoticed, and unexamined, that might do *honour to our lady*?

unanſwerable.—I ſcarcely need inform you that I am now ſpeaking of the miracles aſcribed to the *Abbé Paris*, and ſaid to be performed at his tomb, in the metropolis of a neighbouring kingdom, within theſe thirty years.

The author of the *Free Inquiry into the miraculous Powers of the primitive Church* is at great pains to place theſe works in a diſtinguiſhed point of view. For after filling three or four pages with an account of them ſet off to the greateſt advantage, he concludes with the following reflection. " Let our declaimers then on the authority " of the fathers, produce, if they can, any " evidence of the primitive miracles half " ſo ſtrong, as what is alleged for the " miracles of the *Abbé Paris:* or, if they " cannot do it, let them give us a reaſon " why we muſt receive the one and re- " ject the other: or, if they fail likewiſe " in this, let them be ſo ingenuous at laſt " as to confeſs, that we have no other part " left but either to admit them all, or re-

" ject them all, for otherwiſe they can " never be thought to act conſiſtently *."

The above quotation aims only at the credibility of the miracles atteſted by the fathers; but a late celebrated author on the ſide of infidelity, and whoſe opinions I have already † examined, has urged the miracles aſcribed to the *Abbé Paris*, as what affect the credibility of all miracles in general. " There ſurely (ſays he) never " was ſo great a number of miracles aſ- " cribed to one perſon, as thoſe which " were lately ſaid to have been wrought " in *France* upon the tomb of the *Abbé* " *Paris* the famous *Janſeniſt*, with whoſe " ſanctity the people were ſo long delud- " ed. The curing of the ſick, giving " hearing to the deaf, and ſight to the " blind, were every where talked of as the " effects of that holy ſepulchre. But " what is more extraordinary, many of the

* See Middleton's Free Inquiry, p. 226.

† See above from page 8, to page 35.

"miracles were immediately proved upon
" the ſpot, before judges of unqueſtioned
" credit and diſtinction, in a learned age,
" and on the moſt eminent theatre that is
" now in the world. Nor is this all;
" a relation of them was publiſhed and
" diſperſed every where; nor were the
" *Jeſuits*, though a learned body, ſupport-
" ed by the civil magiſtrate, and deter-
" mined enemies to thoſe opinions in
" whoſe favour the miracles were ſaid to
" have been wrought, ever able diſtinctly
" to refute or detect them. Where ſhall
" we find ſuch a number of circumſtances
" agreeing to the corroboration of one
" fact? And what have we to oppoſe to
" ſuch a cloud of witneſſes, but the abſo-
" lute impoſſibility or miraculous nature
" of the events which they relate? And
" this, ſurely, in the eyes of all reaſonable
" people, will alone be regarded as a ſuf-
" ficient refutation *."

* Philoſophical Eſſays, p. 195.

What he has thus confidently aſſerted to the public, has been often inſiſted on by yourſelf in our private debates. You uſed to talk of it as a point not to be diſputed, that the marks of genuine miracles laid down by *Mr. Leſlie**, in his *Short*

* Mr. Leſlie's four rules of judging of the credibility of miracles, are firſt, That the matter of facts be ſuch, as that men's outward ſenſes, their eyes, and ears, may be judges of it. Secondly, That it be done publicly in the face of the world. Thirdly, That not only public monuments be kept up in memory of it, but ſome outward actions be performed. Fourthly, That ſuch monuments, and ſuch actions or obſervances be inſtituted, and do commence from the time that the matter of fact was done.

The *Short Method with the Deiſts*, has always been looked upon as Mr. Leſlie's maſter-piece. It may ſeem ſtrange, therefore, that the French ſhould claim this treatiſe as theirs. And yet they do; for I find it inſerted, with ſome inconſiderable variations from the Engliſh copy, in the laſt edition of the works of *Abbé de St. Real*. But that Mr. *Leſlie* was the author of this excellent book, is obvious from the following reaſons. Firſt, this piece never had a place amongſt St. *Real's* works, till long after his death, and after the publication of it by *Leſlie*, ſo that we have no authority for its being St. *Real's* beſides that of bookſellers and publiſhers. Secondly, the learned *Le Clerc*, when he attacked the *Short Method*, which was above ten years after St. *Real's*

Method with the Deiſts, are applicable to the miracles aſcribed to the *Abbé Paris:* that theſe facts had an indiſputable right to his two firſt marks; being ſuch as that men's ſenſes could judge of their certainty, and, alſo, being performed openly in the heart of a great city, and in the preſence of crouds of ſpectators: that with regard to his two latter marks, they were only intended as teſts by which to try miracles ſaid to be performed in a diſtant age; whereas the miracles aſcribed to the *Abbé Paris*, had this peculiar advantage of being performed within our own memory: in a word, that you ſaw no way how a Chriſtian could extricate himſelf out of this labyrinth, and reject the miracles of the * *Janſeniſt* ſaint, without

death, attributed it to the *Engliſhman*. Thirdly, the alluſion to *Stone-henge*, and what is mentioned about *Charles Blount* ſpeak ſtrongly for an *Engliſh* author. And, Fourthly, the *French* appears to be a tranſlation from this circumſtance, that whenever it differs from the *Engliſh* copy it is patched up from other parts of Mr. *Leſlie's* works.—His Defence of the Short Method, &c.

* A ſhort account of the Janſeniſts and Janſeniſm, will

having equal reaſon to reject thoſe of the founder of Chriſtianity.

be proper in this place. The Janſeniſts are ſo denominated from Janſenius Biſhop of *Ipres*, who died 1638. His opinions gaining ground in France were complained of by the Jeſuits, to Rome, and condemned by Innocent the Xth in 1653, and by Alexander the VIIth in 1657. In the bulls of theſe two popes, five propoſitions, ſaid to be extracted from Janſenius's book, called Auguſtinus, were condemned, and as they contain the diſtinguiſhing tenets aſcribed to the Janſeniſts, by their antagoniſts, I ſhall inſert them here. *Firſt*, Some of God's commands are impoſſible to be fulfilled by righteous men even though they endeavour with all their power to obey them, becauſe the grace by which they ſhould be enabled to fulfil them is wanting. *Secondly*, In our preſent ſtate of corrupt nature, man never reſiſts inward grace. *Thirdly*, In our preſent, corrupt ſtate, it is not requiſite in order to a man's having merit or demerit, that he ſhould have ſuch a freedom of will as excludes neceſſity; that which excludes compulſion is ſufficient. *Fourthly*, The Semi-Pelagians admitted the neceſſity of inward preventing grace not only to the beginning of faith, but alſo to every future act of it; but they were heretics becauſe they aſſerted that this grace might be reſiſted. *Fifthly*, The Semi-Pelagians are heretics, for ſaying that Chriſt died for all men in general.—The condemnation of theſe five propoſitions gave riſe to vaſt animoſities and controverſies in France, till, at laſt, in 1668, the Pope was prevailed upon to require no more from the Janſeniſts, than that they ſhould ſubſcribe to the condemnation of the five

Such, then, being the uſe made of the pretended miracles of the *Abbé*

propoſitions in general, without mentioning their being contained in the book of Janſenius. This they agreed to; and this tranſaction is uſually called the Peace of Janſeniſm. But the calm was of ſhort duration. For ſo early as 1679, we find Mr. Arnaud, the famous Champion of Janſeniſm, retiring out of France, not thinking himſelf ſafe, any longer there. He was followed in his retreat by Paſquier Queſnel, a prieſt of the Oratory, whoſe *Moral Reflections on the New Teſtament*, publiſhed at Bruſſels in 1698, occaſioned the revival of the diſputes with greater violence than ever. An approbation, prefixed to this book, by the Biſhop of Chalons (afterwards Cardinal de Noailles and Archbiſhop of Paris) occaſioned the condemnation of it. For the Jeſuits bearing this prelate a grudge, immediately began their intrigues, and after ſeveral unſucceſsful applications, at length in 1713, got Clement the XIth to publiſh the famous bull or conſtitution, uſually called *Unigenitus*, becauſe it begins with theſe words, Unigenitus Filius Dei, &c. &c. By this bull *one hundred and one propoſitions*, ſaid to be extracted from Father Queſnel's book, were condemned as falſe, captious, blaſphemous, ill ſounding, ſcandalous, impious, raſh, bordering upon hereſy, heretical, &c. &c. without giving any particular propoſition its proper qualification. Lewis the XIVth now in his dotage, and under the direction of the Jeſuits, favoured this bull ſo much, that Cardinal de Noailles and ſeven or eight biſhops refuſing to accept it, *Lettres de Cachet* were prepared againſt them, when the king's death opened a new ſcene. The govern-

Paris *, an examination of them becomes very neceſſary, and ſhall now be entered

ment having now changed hands a change of meaſures alſo enſued, and the duke of *Orleans*, the regent, not willing to hazard the peace of the kingdom by a perſecution of the oppoſers of the bull, by an edict enjoined ſilence concerning it, as the beſt method of deciding the controverſy. This injunction of ſilence, as it was all the Janſeniſts could deſire, greatly diſpleaſed the court of Rome. But though the Pope threatened excommunication to thoſe who received not the conſtitution, Cardinal de Noailles and his party, diſregarded the thunder of the conclave, and appealed to a general council: hence they were called *appellants*. Thus far all went well with them. But Noailles, now doating, being prevailed upon to ſubmit, the Duke of Orleans dying, and the Jeſuits once more getting footing at court, from that period down to the preſent time, the Janſeniſts have been under a cloud, and the reception of the bull ſo ſtrenuouſly inſiſted on, as to produce the late proceedings which have ended in the baniſhment of the parliament of Paris.

* It may not be unentertaining to give ſome account of this perſon, to whoſe interceſſion ſo many wonders have been aſcribed.—The *Abbe Paris* was a gentleman of very good family of the robe, and eldeſt ſon of a counſellor of the parliament of Paris. From his earlieſt youth he diſcovered a remarkable turn for the extravagancies of devotion. As he grew up, this got ſo far the better of his reaſon, that he relinquiſhed all pretenſions of ſucceeding to his father's poſt, to a younger brother, and dedicated himſelf to the

upon. And I am not without hope that I have it in my power to give you ſuch a

church, mortifying himſelf with continual faſtings, and ſcarcely ever ſtirring from before his crucifix. Not thinking this enough to inſure his ſalvation, he quitted every advantage his birth had given him, and having ſold his eſtate, buried himſelf in an obſcure retreat, known only to the ſick and needy whom he adminiſtered unto, and relieved. With all this ſanctity he was, in his own opinion, the greateſt of ſinners. This diffidence was the grand principle of his conduct; it made him puniſh himſelf with the moſt ſevere penances, tear his fleſh with the moſt cruel flagellations, in ſhort, practiſe all the extravagancies of the wildeſt fanatic; a name, which, if a weak judgment and a warm fancy be characteriſtics of fanaticiſm, belonged to the bleſſed Deacon, an appellation which our Abbé was honoured with, who thought himſelf unworthy of the higher order of prieſthood. Having acquired a vaſt reputation of ſanctity among the Janſeniſts, he died on the firſt of May, 1727, (not 1725 as Dr. Middleton ſays) and was buried in the church-yard of St. Medard at Paris, near the South wall of the church, a tomb-ſtone being put up that covered the extent of his grave, which, from the time of his death, was frequented by his admirers. The number of worſhippers increaſing daily, an opinion of the efficacy of worſhipping there gained ground alſo. By degrees it was rumoured about, that the ſick had by their prayers at the tomb been reſtored to health; and cures of an aſtoniſhing nature had been wrought by the interceſſion of the bleſſed Deacon; till, at length, in the year 1731 theſe reports having put the whole city of

view of theſe boaſted facts as will ſatisfy you how unfair a repreſentation of them

Paris in a ferment, and St. Medard's Church-yard being crouded from morning to night with ſick praying for relief, the civil magiſtrate, unable by any other means to ſtem the torrents and cloſe the liſt of miracles, fell upon the expedient of debarring all approach to the ſcene of wonders, by walling up the ſepulchre. It was on this occaſion, that the following frequently repeated diſtich was made, and put upon the wall.

De par le Roi—defence à Dieu
De faire miracles en ce lieu.

Our ſaint's miracles, after this, become leſs frequent, though ſome were attributed ſtill to him, as in the caſe of Gautier related by Montgeron; and even to this day, he performs wonderful feats among the *Convulſionaries*, whoſe extravagancies have done ſo much diſcredit to the cauſe of Janſeniſm, that the ſober part of that ſect have not only diſclaimed all connexion with them, but have alſo employed ſome of their ableſt writers to expoſe their frantic abſurdities. Theſe convulſioniſts well deſerve this appellation; for they have amongſt them adepts who can, with pleaſure, work themſelves up to the ſtrangeſt agitations and convulſions, practiſing feats which would entertain a Bartholomew-fair audience. Mr. Powel the fire-eater may have learnt his art among them, for they have ſome who are invulnerable by fire; others, again, like another ſet of jugglers, are impenetrable by the point of a ſharp ſword. In the year 1749 being at Paris, I was invited to go to one of their

we have had in the above quotations from Dr. *Middleton*, and the author of the *Eſſay on Miracles*, and conſequently with how little reaſon they have been ſet up in oppoſition to the miracles of the New Teſtament.

An infinite number of treatiſes concerning them were publiſhed in *France:* but the pompous book of *Mr. de Montgeron* for, and the Paſtoral Letters of the Archbiſhop of *Sens*, againſt them, contain all that can be offered on either ſide, and all that is neceſſary to enable us to form our judgment of the affair. Theſe I have peruſed with care, and ſhall quote with fidelity, and upon the whole, ſatisfy you that all the extraordinary facts aſcribed to the

meetings, where I was told I ſhould be entertained with the exploits of one of their famous heroes, who could not only bring on convulſions when he pleaſed, but when he was in that ſtate, would lie on the floor and allow his breaſt to be beat with a ſtone or hammer. Though my curioſity was not ſo great as to make me a witneſs of this myſelf, the perſon whom I had my information from, had ſeen the operation.

Abbé Paris may be included under theſe two heads; Firſt, that in many inſtances, fraud and impoſture were fairly proved and detected, and Secondly, that the cures *really* performed at the tomb, can be accounted for by natural cauſes which I ſhall aſſign.

Firſt, then, that fraud and impoſture were detected in many inſtances, was notorious to all the world, at the very time, and is confirmed to us by all the vouchers which the nature of the thing allows. Suffer me to mention two or three, from the Archbiſhop of *Sens;* from which it will appear how little reaſon the author of the *Eſſay on Miracles* had for aſſerting —*that the Jeſuits, a learned body, ſupported by the civil magiſtrates, and determined enemies to thoſe opinions in whoſe favour the miracles were ſaid to have been wrought, were never able diſtinctly to refute or detect them.*

Six of theſe cures had been corrobora-

ted by a verbal proceſs taken by order of *Cardinal de Noailles*, in 1728, before a commiſſary appointed by him. Three or four years after, above twenty of the curés of *Paris*, preſented a petition to *Noailles*'s ſucceſſor in the ſee of that city, requeſting that four of theſe cures might be ſolemnly publiſhed to the people as miracles. Whence, then, their ſilence as to the other two? It aroſe from the notorious detection of impoſture in the caſes of *Jacques Laurent Menedrieux*, and *Jean Nivet*, which laſt perſon in particular, was, in conſequence of a freſh examination, made in 1732, produced and found to be as lame and blind as ever, though eleven witneſſes had atteſted his cure, in 1728, before the commiſſary, who choſe to be content with their evidence, without requiring them to produce *Nivet* himſelf.

In a ſubſequent petition to their archbiſhop, the ſame zealous friends of the *Abbé Paris* requeſted the publication of a great many other cures of a later date

than the four already preſented by them. But fraud and impoſture could be proved now, as well as before. One of the caſes was of the *Sieur le Doulx*, who was ſaid to have been cured of a fever by having ſome reliques of the *Abbé Paris* put under his head, when he was given over, and had received the ſacraments. Now the impoſture, here, was detected by the ſick perſon himſelf, who in a letter written by him to the Biſhop of *Laon* declares, that the whole was a trick of the *Janſeniſt* community of *St. Hilaire*, who had preſſed upon him a confeſſor, and adminiſtered the ſacraments to him, which might be looked upon as marks of his being dangerouſly ill, but was far from being the caſe. *Laleu* a laceman, and *Anne Coulon*, ſaid to be born deaf and dumb, and repreſented as having received their cure at the ſepulchre of the Abbé were afterwards proved to have always enjoyed their faculties of ſpeech and hearing, though in an imperfect degree.—*Anne le Franc* was ſaid to be cured of a

complication of diſtempers, and amongſt others of a diſorder in her eyes. On an examination made by the Archbiſhop of *Paris*, it appeared from the teſtimony of all her relations, that ſhe had never been in the dangerous way repreſented, particularly that ſhe had never had any diſorder in her eyes.—As ingenious a piece of fraud as any, was detected in the caſe of the widow *de Lorme*, who pretended to be ſtruck with the palſy, for going to the tomb with an intention to ridicule. Her own confeſſion of the contrivance, and other authentic documents, brought this to light.

It would be needleſs to multiply inſtances (which I could eaſily do) becauſe thoſe already mentioned, are ſufficient to prove that ſome of the pretended miraculous cures were detected to be the offspring of fraud. But if this be certain, it is equally ſo, that, in many of the caſes alleged, no fraud was detected. If the certainty of ſome of the cures could have been diſput-

ed, the Archbiſhop of *Sens**, and other prelates would not have laboured ſo much, as we know they did, to prove, from the circumſtances of them, that they were operations of the devil.

An examination, therefore, of thoſe cures performed at the tomb of the *Abbé Paris*, the evidence of which ſtands unimpeached of fraud, becomes neceſſary, and I flatter myſelf that I ſhall be able to diveſt them of that miraculous garb with which ignorance and credulity have dreſſ-

* The title of the Archbiſhop's performance is—*Inſtruction Paſtorale de Monſeigneur J. Joſeph Languet, Archeveque de Sens;—ci-devant Eveque de Soiſſons, au Sujet des pretendus Miracles du Diacre de St. Medard, & des Convulſions arrivees à ſon Tombeau.* There are three parts, publiſhed at three different times. In the firſt, the Archbiſhop endeavours to ſhew that the pretended miracles have neither certainty nor evidence; in the ſecond, that the circumſtances of them prove they are rather the operations of the devil than of God; in the third, he would eſtabliſh this point, that no regard is to be paid to miracles in oppoſition to the body of chief paſtors united to their head.—Had the prelate been ſatisfied, that he had made good his firſt head, the other two would have been quite ſuperfluous.

ed them up, and which infidelity and ſcepticiſm affect to cloath them in, that they ſerve their purpoſes in their attacks againſt the credibility of all miracles whatever.

Miracles may be divided into two claſſes; of effects which are, in themſelves, ſuch as could not, by any natural means be produced; and of effects, which though in themſelves ſuch as might be produced naturally, yet could not be produced, in that manner, and with thoſe circumſtances, without the interpoſition of ſome inviſible power *. When therefore an effect of the former kind is atteſted, upon a ſuppoſition that there be no defect in the teſtimony, the credibility of the fact, at the ſame time eſtabliſhes the credibility of the miracle. But when effects of the latter kind, effects which might be produced naturally, are, from the attendant circumſtances, aſcribed to inviſible power,

* See the ſermon of Biſhop Conybeare on miracles, page 8.

in ſuch caſes we muſt not content ourſelves with the certainty of the facts, but before we admit the judgment of the witneſſes who pronounced them ſupernatural, we muſt enter upon an examination of their circumſtances ourſelves; becauſe theſe witneſſes may have been miſled by ignorance, prompted by credulity, or excited by views of intereſt, to aſcribe to an inviſible ſupernatural interpoſition, what really happened through the agency of cauſes merely natural. Let us, therefore, ſee, to which claſs of miracles we muſt allot the cures attributed to the *Abbé Paris.*

Now the likelieſt way of diſcovering whether any of them were beyond the reach of natural means, is to take *Montgeron*'s book into our hands, to examine the caſes he has collected, and to reſt this point on his evidence. When you conſider how zealous an advocate for the miracles he was, you cannot but be of opinion, with me, that he has taken care

to ſelect thoſe caſes which bore the ſtrongeſt marks of a ſupernatural interpoſition; and therefore, if any cures, in themſelves miraculous, could have been attributed to his favourite ſaint, with any ſhew of evidence, we might have expected to find them in his collection: but that there are none ſuch to be met with there, I ſhall now ſatisfy you.

Conſidering that the book in queſtion, is a large quarto volume, one may well be ſurprized to hear that it contains an account of only *eight* cures *. Yet this is the caſe; and *Montgeron*, I ſuppoſe, thought that a few cures vouched by many certificates, would do more to eſtabliſh his ſaint's reputation, than many cures vouched by few.

* Beſides the eight cures which Montgeron expatiates upon very copiouſly, a ninth is alſo produced by him, and two or three certificates concerning it, are inſerted. But as he himſelf adds nothing to corroborate it, his book may properly be ſaid to treat only of eight cures.

The firſt cure related by him is of *Don Antonio de Palachios*, a young gentleman who had loſt one eye entirely, and was afflicted with a weakneſs and inflammation of the other. Now there cannot be the leaſt pretence for affirming that the relief received by this patient was beyond the reach of human means. For what happened here? The inflamed eye, indeed, was cured: but, it ſeems, our wonder-working Abbé could not reſtore the other, which remained as dark as before.

Or will any body pronounce the diſeaſes of *Margaret Thibault*, and of *Margaret Frances Du Cheſne* as incurable by natural means?—However exaggerated by *Montgeron;* however artificially branched out by him into a variety of ſymptoms, yet, that complications of diſtempers, ariſing from obſtructions in the fluids, ſhould be curable by human means, cannot be denied. The illneſs of the former of theſe patients, aroſe, as Mr. *Reneaume* (a phyſi-

cian who had originally attended her) tells us *, from obſtructions occaſioned by a thick inflamed blood, which had not a proper circulation. And Mr. *Coſtard* who had preſcribed for the latter, ſeems to derive † the variety of complaints under which ſhe laboured, from the ſuppreſſion

* Je la trouvai d'abord dangereuſement malade d'une eſpece de diſpoſition apoplectique cauſée par une portion de l'humeur d'une rheumatiſme gouteux, ou goute vague: Cette humeur ſe jettant ſur le bras y cauſa de vives douleurs; et comme la violence de la douleur empechoit le mouvement de cette partie, on appelloit cette diſpoſition, paralyſie.—Il eſt a remarquer que tout le ſang qu'on lui tira etoit tres epais, coigneux, et inflammatoire; le ſang de cette qualité coule difficilement, et eſt tres propre a former des embarras.

N° 5 of the certificates about Thibault in Montgeron.

† J'ai eté appellé pour la voir vers paques de l'année 1730. Elle etoit malade depuis plus de deux ans et demi: Elle ſe plaignoit a moi d'une douleur de côté, d'un mal de tete inſupportable—d'un mal d'eſtomach, vomiſſant ſa nourriture, &c. &c.—La ſource de tant des maux, venoit d'une chute que la malade avoit fait ſur l'eſtomach, ce qui peu de tems apres avoit eté ſuivi de la ſuppreſſion de ſes regles.

N° 5 of the certificates about Du Cheſne in Montgeron.

of her menſes, the conſequence of a fall. So that in theſe two caſes, nothing more was to be done than to remove an obſtruction, the removal of which would, of courſe, reſtore health.

The cures of *Mary Anne Couronneau*, *Philip Sergeant*, and *Louiſa Hardouin*, three more of *Montgeron's* miraculés, who were paralytic, will not certainly be pronounced beyond the reach of natural means. Palſies, it is well known, ariſe from obſtructions of the ſpirits that circulate in the nerves, ſo that their influx into the muſcles is impeded; or from obſtructions of the arterious blood. Nothing more, therefore, was required here, than to remove that obſtruction; and the daily cures of the moſt univerſal palſies, ſatisfy us that the relief received by the three abovementioned patients, might be entirely natural. *Louiſa Coirin's* complaint was a tumor on her left breaſt: and, ſuppoſing it to be a tumor of the moſt terrible kind—a cancer, yet have we no reaſon for

pronouncing *even* this diſeaſe incurable. It is to be effected by changing the ſtate of the blood, and therefore, cannot be ſaid to require a ſupernatural cauſe.—Phyſicians, indeed, will tell us that the hiſtory of phyſic furniſhes no inſtance of a cancer's being cured: granting this to be true, what will it prove? It may prove the imperfection of the ſcience they profeſs, but it can never prove that a cancer is abſolutely incurable: It may prove their ignorance of any human means adequate to ſuch a cure, (and the beſt phyſicians will confeſs their ignorance in many inſtances) but can never prove that no ſuch means exiſt *.

There remains to be conſidered, of *Montgeron*'s eight cures, the nature of that

* The fact generally aſſerted, that there are no inſtances of cancers cured, without the exciſion of the part, is contradicted by recent experience. For that Mr. Ward has cured tumors on breaſts, pronounced to be cancers, and treated as ſuch by the regular-bred ſurgeons and phyſicians, is a fact which, were it neceſſary, could be confirmed by deſcending to particulars.

of *Peter Gautier* *, whoſe eye had been pierced through with an awl. And that nothing happened in his caſe, which could not be effected by natural means, every one, who knows any thing of the ſtructure of the eye, muſt admit. To a perſon unacquainted with this, indeed, it may ſeem very ſurprizing, that an eye pierced through with an awl, ſhould recover its viſion; and, accordingly, *Montgeron* triumphs in this, as a cure which was abſolutely above the power of natural cauſes. And, yet, inſtances are far from being uncommon, where the piercing of the eye did not render the recovery of ſight impoſſible. Particularly, the operation of *couching* for the *cataract* is performed by running a ſteel needle into the

* This cure was performed in 1733, after the ſhutting up of the tomb, at Pezenas in Languedoc. Another cure performed at Seignelai, the ſame year, on Edmee Deſvignes, was the only one, of all thoſe attributed to our Abbé, publiſhed by a biſhop, with ſolemnity as a miracle. The Biſhop of Auxerre, famous for his zeal as a Janſeniſt, did it this honour.

eye, through the *adnata*, by the edge of the *cornea*, till it arrive at the middle of the *cataract*. Now nothing happened to *Peter Gautier's* eye, but what is done without any bad conſequence, in the operation of couching. His eye was pierced through the *cornea*, and the *aqueous humor* dropped out upon his hand: and in *couching*, the eye muſt be pierced in the ſame manner by the oculiſt, and the *aqueous humor* is ſometimes loſt. But, then, it is well known that this is a ſubſtance which is reproduced; and, therefore, neither the wound made by the ſharp inſtrument, nor the conſequences of that wound, the loſs of the *aqueous humor*, do imply that any parts of the eye eſſential to *viſion* were deſtroyed *.

From the above deduction of particulars, it appears that none of the cures

* Beſides the reſtoration of the pierced eye, the diſappearing of two ſpecks, on the other, is made a part of this miracle; but ſo trifling a part, that we need not ſay more of it.

attributed to the *Abbé Paris* by *Montgeron*, are such as were, in themselves, miraculous; so that if there was any supernatural interposition in bringing them about, this must be collected from the manner and circumstances in which they happened; an inquiry into which, therefore, becomes necessary.

Now I think this must be affirmed, that there can be no pretence for calling in *supernatural causes*, unless, from the circumstances attending the facts in question, we may have an assurance that no *natural causes* operated. But how can we have such an assurance?—The defenders of their miraculous nature, are, indeed, in the right when they tell us, that there can be no natural efficacy in prostration on the Abbé's tomb, or in supplication to him, to produce the recovery of the use of limbs, or the removal of dropsical swellings. But, then, they will find it extremely hard to prove, that no other *natural* causes, more adequate, did operate. How

know we but that the cures would have equally happened, though the ſaint had never been applied to? How know we, that the patients were not already in a healing way when they ſought relief from the Abbé? Can we be abſolutely certain that the ſtrength of their conſtitutions had not got the better of their diſeaſes, at this particular juncture? Or might not medicines formerly taken, and other experiments tried, have contributed to the relief aſcribed to the interpoſition of our ſaint? —In a word, to uſe the obſervation of *Dr. Middleton*, "every man's experience has "taught him, that diſeaſes thought fatal "and deſperate, are often ſurprizingly "healed of themſelves, by ſome ſecret and "ſudden effort of nature, impenetrable to "the ſkill of man; but to aſcribe this pre-"ſently to a miracle, as weak and ſuper-"ſtitious minds are apt to do; to the pray-"ers of the living, or the interceſſion of "the dead, is what neither ſound reaſon "nor true religion will juſtify". *

* Free Inquiry, p. 79.

Theſe reflections occur upon the firſt view; and even before we are able to point out any particular circumſtances, which are inconſiſtent with the ſuppoſition of there being any ſupernatural interpoſition in bringing about the cures we now treat of. And that ſuch circumſtances can be aſſigned, in ſome of the caſes inſiſted upon by *Montgeron*, I ſhall now endeavour to ſatisfy you.

And, firſt, the circumſtances attending the cure of *Don Alphonſo* are ſuch as make it matter of wonder, that *Montgeron* ſhould give it a place amongſt the miracles of his ſaint. The inflammation and weakneſs of this gentleman's eye, at the time when he began his *neuvaine* to the Abbé, are, indeed, unexceptionably well atteſted. Yet there is not the leaſt, moſt diſtant ground, for aſcribing the relief he received to the interceſſion of the bleſſed deacon. For the depoſitions of the witneſſes mention this very remarkable circumſtance, that he actually, at the ſame time, made

uſe of remedies preſcribed by Mr. *St. Yves* * an eminent oculiſt, and had, for a day or two previouſly to the removal of the inflammation, bathed his eye with a medicine compoſed of a decoction of *maſh-mallows* mixed with ſome *laudanum*.

How ridiculous is it then, to ſee the admirers of the *Abbé Paris* boaſt of this as one of his mighty deeds? The young gentleman is troubled with an inflammation in his eye; he applies to the *Abbé Paris* to be cured by him; but, at the ſame time, makes uſe of a medicine preſcribed by an oculiſt. Which, therefore, ought to have the honour of the cure? The dead ſaint, or the living oculiſt?—I believe, while the latter was employed, few will think there can be any grounds for ſuppoſing that the former, at all, interpoſed.—Beſides it appears from the certificates collected by *Montgeron*, that

* Author of a well-eſteemed book on the diſeaſes of the eye.

Don Alphonſo's eye was ſo much inflamed in the beginning of 1731, that he was obliged to ſuſpend his ſtudies; but that the uſe of an eye-water preſcribed by a woman, gave him temporary relief; and his eye continued tolerably well, till the month of *June*, when he applied to our *Abbé*. Can there, therefore, be any reaſon to doubt of his being relieved, *now*, by the medicine of Mr. *St. Yves*, when we have this inſtance of his being relieved, before, by the medicine of an old woman?

Two other of *Montgeron*'s cures, that of *Louiſa Coirin*'s ſwelled breaſt, and that of *Peter Gaulier*'s pierced eye, ſeem very improper inſtances to prove the interpoſition of his ſaint.—With regard to the former, we have no aſſurance from any of the witneſſes produced, either of her not being in a healing way before ſhe applied to our *Abbé*, or of her not making uſe of the medicines proper for her complaint, beſides her own and her ſervant's evidence. The whole affair is tranſacted

in private; fraud may, for aught we know, have been practiſed, and the very ſuſpicion of fraud deſtroys the credibility of the fact.

Or if we conſider the evidence urged in ſupport of *Peter Gautier*'s cure, we ſhall find that we have only his own word to make us believe he was blind at the time when he began his *neuvaines* to the *Abbé*. That his eye had been pierced through with an awl, and that, in conſequence of this wound, he had loſt the uſe of it, for ſome time, is proved by a cloud of witneſſes. But that he had not recovered the uſe of it, long before the ſaint was applied to, depends upon his own ſingle affirmation; and how little regard ought to be paid to it, will ſtrike every one who conſiders that *Gautier*, even according to *Montgeron*'s account, was entirely directed and influenced by one Mr. *Cariſſol* a prieſt, and a moſt zealous admirer of the *Abbé Paris*.—But why ſhould I mention bare ſuſpicions, when poſitive evidence can be

offered, to prove that *Gautier* had recovered his ſight, before he applied to the bleſſed deacon? The Archbiſhop of *Sens*, in his *Paſtoral Inſtruction*, diſcloſes to us the ſcene of fraud. From him we learn, that *Gautier*'s own uncle gave evidence that his nephew could ſee with the pierced eye, within a few weeks after the accident, and fifteen months before he began his prayers. Nay, farther, it appeared that *Gautier* himſelf recanted his former ſtory, and ſigned a depoſition to that effect *.

* If I had not propoſed to confine myſelf to the cures related by Montgeron, I could have produced a great many from the Archbiſhop of Sens, the circumſtances of which ſhewed that there could not be the leaſt ground for attributing them to the interpoſition of our Abbé. I ſhall juſt mention one or two.—Peter Lero, who was ſuppoſed to be cured of ulcers in his left leg, by praying at the tomb, was in a healing way before he went thither: And no wonder that his ulcers ſhould heal up in eighteen days—the time he employed in praying to our ſaint.— Elizabeth Laloë, pretended to be cured of a hard ſwelled breaſt, by applying to it the holy earth. But it appeared, upon examination, that ſhe was with child, and that the ſwelling of her breaſt was owing to her having taken medicines to occaſion

But though ſome of *Montgeron*'s miraculés were cured, at leaſt were in a way of being cured, before they applied to our ſaint, I muſt own this cannot be affirmed to have been the caſe of them all. For that the diſeaſes of others of them were, ſeemingly, at the worſt, and that ſudden changes were wrought at the tomb on ſupplicants, at the very inſtant of their application, theſe are facts, which, as they could not be invalidated at the very time, it would be unreaſonable to deny now. For inſtance, I cannot find the leaſt defect, in the evidence urged in ſupport of the cure of *Margaret Thibault.* The reality of her diſeaſe is atteſted to us by ſix phyſicians *, three of whom examined her only two days before ſhe went to the tomb, and having ſeen her again, immediately after her return from it, bear wit-

an abortion, and, therefore, ceaſed on her being brought to bed; and would equally have ceaſed though ſhe had never uſed the earth.

* Meſſrs. Cointre, Reneaume, Chomel, Coldevilars, Coſnier, et De Lepine.

neſs to an amazing change wrought upon her health, a change, which crouds of ſpectators, preſent with her at the tomb, alſo atteſt. Nor can the Archbiſhop of *Sens* invalidate the truth of this, contenting himſelf with a certificate of Mr. *Silva*, phyſician to the Duke of *Orleans*; which indeed proves that her cure was not complete, ſhe not having recovered the uſe of two of her fingers, but does not affect the evidence brought to prove that ſhe was freed from other ſymptoms.—Neither do I find that any well-grounded objection could be offered in the caſe of *Margaret Frances Ducheſne*. The dropſical ſwelling of this patient, as of *Margaret Thibault*, could not be counterfeit, and the viſible, ſudden decreaſe of theſe ſwellings was a fact of which the ſenſes of the ſpectators could be certain. The paralytic ſupplicants, indeed, *Couronneau*, *Sergeant*, and *Hardouin* could more eaſily impoſe upon ſpectators, and pretend to be reſtored to the uſe of limbs, of which they had never been deprived. But I muſt own,

except in the caſe of *Couranneau* *, there doth not ſeem the leaſt ground for ſuſpicion on this head: the reality of their complaints, and the ſudden relief they received at the tomb are ſo ſtrongly atteſted, that it would be ſcepticiſm to ſuppoſe the whole was colluſion and fraud.

But though I am obliged to admit ſome of the facts, I am not obliged to admit the conſequence drawn by the *Janſeniſts*, that there was any miracle in the caſe.—Whenever *natural cauſes* ſufficient to account for an event can be aſſigned, it would be folly and ſuperſtition to have recourſe to ſupernatural ones †. If therefore I can aſſign natural cauſes ſufficient to account for the benefit received by ſome of the ſupplicants in St. *Medard*'s church-

* The Archbiſhop of *Sens* would have us believe that this woman was cured before ſhe went to the tomb. But, on comparing what he advances, with the certificates produced by Montgeron, I cannot think he has detected any fraud in this caſe.

† Nec Deus interſit, niſi dignus vindice nodus. HOR.

yard, I think I ſhall have effectually overturned the pretenſions to a miraculous interpoſition.

That impreſſions made on the mind produce ſurprizing changes on the habit of the body, we are as certain of, as we are certain that a change can be wrought on it by medicines, or any other external cauſe. The truth of this will not, I imagine, be diſputed by any one, ſo far as it relates to a change of the habit of the body for the worſe. For that diſeaſes often take their riſe from the affections and paſſions of the mind, is a fact confirmed by experience in a vaſt notoriety of inſtances. Can there be any thing more inconteſtably true, than that care and anxiety, diſappointment in what we have ardently wiſhed for, and loſs of what we have affectionately loved, by preying upon the mind and engroſſing all its attention, will diſorder the whole frame of the body, and become the ſource both of *chronic* and *acute* complaints?

But not to infiſt upon the more ſilent and ſlow workings of a ſettled melancholy, ruining and undermining the health by degrees, equally agreeable to experience, and more appoſite to our preſent purpoſe, are inſtances of ſudden and alarming diſorders, occaſioned by the violence of impreſſions made by fear, by anger, by joy. —If your own experience has not brought any ſuch inſtances within the reach of your knowledge, the hiſtorian will tell you they have happened, and the phyſician will corroborate his teſtimony, and aſſign the cauſe.

Remarkable in the hiſtories of *France*, is the ſtory of *John de Poictiers*, count *de St. Valier* *. Convicted of being an aſſo-

* This account of John de Poictiers I have from Moreri. " Diane de Poictiers Ducheſſe de Valentinois, celebre ſous " le regne de Henri II. étoit fille de Jean de Poictiers, " Comte de St. Valier.--Diana gagna par ſa beauté le cœur " de la plus part des grands de la cour. Jean de Poictiers " ſon pere fut convaincu d'avoir favorifé les deſſeins et la " fuite de Charles connetable de Bourbon. On l'arreta a

ciate in the conſpiracy of the conſtable of *Bourbon*, againſt *Francis* I. and condemned to loſe his head at *Lions*, the fear and

" Lion ou le roi Francois I. étoit; et depuis on le con-
" demna a perdre la tete. Le deplaiſir qu'il eut de ſe voir
" perdu fut ſi grand, qu'en une nuit les cheveux lui blan-
" chirent ſi abſolument, que ceux qui l'avoient en garde le
" prirent le lendemain pour un autre. Il tomba meme dans
" une fievre ſi violente qu'encore que Diane ſa fille eut ob-
" tenu ſa grace, il ne put guerir, quelque remede qu'on y
" apportat.—Ce de la qu'eſt venu le proverbe de la fievre
" de St. Valier."

Moreri Artic. Diane de Poictiers.

As Thuanus's account of this ſtory differs ſomewhat from Moreri's, I ſhall alſo inſert it. " Diana patrem habuit
" Joannem Pictavienſem, Sanvalerium, qui Caroli Bor-
" bonii conjurationis particeps, cum apud ſacerdotem rem
" ſecreto confeſſus eſſet, a ſacerdote delatus, & ad mortem
" damnatus eſt. Cum ad ſupplicium duceretur, ex pavore
" in tam acutam febrim incidit ut, veniâ in gratiam filiæ—
" a Franciſco impetratâ, vix ad mentem & ſanitatem, fæ-
" pius miſſo ſanguine, reduci potuerit; unde ſanvaleriana
" febris apud nos in proverbium abiit."

Thuanus, Lib. III. ad An. 1547.

But father Anſelme, in his Palais d'Honneur, p. 555, more conformably to Moreri's relation, ſays that St. Valier ſaw death ſo near him, and was ſo greatly terrified on that occaſion, that, when brought back to his houſe, a fever ſeized him with ſo much violence, that he died.

other violent paſſions with which his mind was diſtracted, had ſuch an effect, that, in one night, his hair was turned ſo entirely grey, that the officers of the priſon took him next morning for another perſon. But this was not all, for he was ſeized with ſo violent a fever, that though his daughter *Diana*, famous under the name of *Ducheſs de Valentinois*, had, by her charms, procured his pardon from the king, no remedies, though all that phyſic could dictate were uſed, were able to prevent his death.

An inſtance of a ſimilar kind happened to *Henry* the IVth of *France*, and we have the beſt authority, his own word, for its truth.—*Matthieu*, his hiſtorian, ſays that he was preſent when the king told the *Marquis de la Force*, that when he heard the unexpected and mortifying news, that *Henry* the IIId had publiſhed the edict of *July* 1585 (by which every *Hugonot* was ordered either to go to maſs, or to leave the kingdom in ſix months) he was ſo

greatly affected, that, in an inſtant, the *muſtachio* or whiſker, on that ſide of his face which happened then to reſt upon his hand, was converted into grey *.

But as relations of this nature will, perhaps, have greater weight when vouched by writers in the medical way, I ſhall preſent you with a moſt ſurprizing inſtance of the force of an impreſſion made upon the mind, in bringing on a fatal change on the body, which I find in the *Operations de Chirurgerie* of *Verduc*, and extracted by him from *Kerkeren's Spicilegium Anatomicum.*

Verduc, after treating of the effects of

* Henri IV. dit au Marquis de la Force, en preſence de Matthieu qui le rapporte Liv. 8.; qu'au moment qu'il apprit cette indigne foibleſſe d'Henri III.; ſa mouſtache blanchit tout d'un coup, du coté ou il tenoit ſon viſage appuye ſur ſa main.

Memoires de Sulli, tom. i. edit. 1747.

Another remarkable ſtory of this kind, too long to be tranſcribed, may be ſeen in Howel's Letters, p. 179.

the imagination of the mother on the *fœtus* *, proceeds to ſhew the power of imagination on ourſelves, ſo as to occaſion diſeaſes, by relating the following caſe †.

* For many curious and ſurprizing inſtances of the effects of the imagination of the mother on the fœtus, the reader may conſult Fienus, who is very copious on this ſubject, in his Treatiſe *de Viribus Imaginationis;* Malbranche's *Recherche de la Verité*, B. ii. C. 7. and Dr. James's Dictionary, under the Article of Imagination. As ſome phyſicians pretend to doubt, nay, to laugh at ſuch ſtories, it may not be improper to ſubjoin the opinion of Dr. Mead, and his teſtimony to their truth. "Quid mirabilius iis, "quæ in graviditatibus non raro contingere videmus? Fœ- "mina in utero geſtans, ſi forte quid appetiverit, & fruſtra- "ſit, interdum rei concupitæ figuram quondam, aut, ſimi- "litudinem, in hac aut illâ corporis parte, fœtui ſuo im- "primit. Imo, quod majus, & prodigii inſtar, ſubita partis "alicujus læſione perterrita matre, ipſa illa pars in infante "noxam ſentit, et nutrimenti defectu marceſcit. Scio "hujuſmodi omnes hiſtorias a medicis nonnullis, quoniam "qui talia fieri poſſunt haud percipiunt, in dubium vocari. "—At multa, quæ ipſe vidi, exempla mihi hac in re ſcru- "pulum, omnem ademerunt."

Vide Mead's Medica Sacra, p. 71.

† Un collecteur etant allé chez un payſan pour ſe faire payer de la taille, le payſan lui dit qu'il n'avoit point d'argent, et le prie a de vouloir ſe donner un peu de patience. Le collecteur commanda qu'on fut a ſon grenier, et qu'on

" A collector of the taxes having gone
" to a farmer's house to receive what was

en tira le bled pour le vendre fur la place. Pendant qu'on executa ſes ordres rigoreux, une vielle femme qui ſe trouva preſente, lui frappa ſur le dos trois ou quatre fois, en lui diſant, tout en colere, que faites vous ? Celui ci tout etonné des parolles, et tout emeu des coups que cette vielle femme lui donnoit, ſentit, le jour meme, a l'endroit ou elle l'avoit touché, un petit tubercule de la groſſeur d'une aveline. Cette petite tumeur devint trois jours apres auſſi groſſe qu'une oeuf de poule ; elle s'augmenta dans la ſuite ſi conſiderablement, qu'au bout des trois ans elle étoit auſſi groſſe, qu'une ſac de bled. Le collecteur vint a Amſterdam dans le deſſein d'y conſulter les medecins & les chirurgiens les plus habiles. Ils lui conſulerent tous de ſe garder de faire ouvrir ſa tumeur. Le malade vint auſſi trouver Kerkeren pour le conſulter ; il fut etonné de voir une ſi prodigieuſe tumeur.—Pluſieurs attribuerent la cauſe de cette tumeur monſtreuſe a un ſort que cette vielle avoit jetté ſur cet homme. Mais qui eſt ce que ne voit pas que cette effet venoit de l'imagination de cet homme ſuperſtitieux, qui ſe crut enforcellé par la vielle qui l'avoit frappé ſur le dos ? Car il lui arriva ce qu'arrive aux femmes groſſes qui ont des envies. Son imagination remplie de l'idée de ſac de bled qu'il avoit fait vendre a ce pauvre payſan, & ſe perſuadant que cette vielle étoit forciere, les humeurs qui etoient en mouvement, prirent leur cours vers le dos, a l'endroit ou elles furent determinées par l'imagination, et la firent la tumeur.

Operations de Chirurgerie de Verduc, c. xiv. p. 337.

" due from him, and finding him unable to
" pay, ordered ſome of the corn to be
" taken out of his granary and ſold. As
" they were executing this order rigorouſ-
" ly, an old woman, who happened to be
" preſent, ſtruck the collector, two or
" three times on the back, and with emo-
" tion, cried out—what are you about?
" The collector, who was deeply affected
" with this circumſtance, felt, that very
" day, a little tumor about the bigneſs of
" a bean, on the ſame part, which the
" woman had ſtruck. Within three days,
" the ſwelling had grown to the ſize of
" an hen's egg, and, at laſt, in about three
" years, was as big as a ſack of corn. The
" collector came to *Amſterdam* to conſult
" the moſt expert phyſicians and ſurgeons,
" amongſt whom *Kerkeren* himſelf was
" conſulted, who amazed to ſee ſo prodi-
" gious a tumor, which covered all his
" back, unanimouſly agreed that it ſhould
" not be opened. But he was not ſo wiſe
" as to pay any regard to this; for he
" died ſoon after, at *Cologne*, under the

" hands of a ſurgeon who had undertaken
" the operation. Many attributed this
" monſtrous ſwelling to his being bewitch-
" ed by the old woman. But it certainly
" aroſe from the imagination of this ſu-
" perſtitious man, who had taken this
" fancy into his head. For the ſame thing
" happened to him, which happens to
" pregnant women who long for any
" thing. His imagination being filled
" with the idea of the ſack of corn, which
" he had ſeized from the farmer, and
" having fancied that the old woman was
" a witch, the humours which were in
" motion took their courſe towards the
" back, to the place whither they had
" been determined by the imagination,
" and there cauſed the ſwelling."

Verduc, in the above paſſage, while he relates the fact, alſo aſſigns the cauſe. Impreſſions made upon the mind, by acting upon the blood and ſpirits (a power which we know they have, in conſequence of the intimate union that con-

nects the two parts of our nature) may be the means of detaching too great a quantity of fluids to a ſound part, which ſtagnating there, nature may become oppreſſed, and the tone of the ſolid parts receive a preternatural diſtention. And that a vaſt variety of diſeaſes may be thus occaſioned, you will ſee confirmed by the authority of *Fienus* in the note *: an authority which you will hardly diſpute, as I can corroborate it with that of one ſtill alive, whom not to call the ornament of his profeſſion would be unjuſt, and to ſay more of him would be impertinent †.

* Phantaſia eſt cauſa motus humorum & ſpirituum in corpore.—Motu humorum & ſpirituum poſſunt varii, imo omnis generis, morbi in nobis caufari: Nam motu humorum poſſunt fieri obſtructiones, & conſequanter apoplexiæ, calculi, aſthma, dyſuria, cæcitas &c. ulcera & apoſtemata interna: Motu ſpirituum poſſunt fieri deliquia, vertigines, &c. Imo videtur quod homo per ſuam imaginationem poſſet ſe fere afficere quocumque morbo vellet. Etenim—imaginatio habet vim directoriam: Ergo poteſt humores in quamcunque parte determinatam dirigere, & in eâ morbum facere, imo etiam hunc vel illum morbum determinare.

De viribus Imagina, p. 159.

† Dr. Mead, whoſe words are—Annon hominem peſſun-

Not to enlarge, therefore, on ſuch facts, as more inſtances of them would be unneceſſary, I ſhall now proceed to obſerve, that impreſſions made upon the mind may alſo have an efficacy to change the habit of the body for the better, as well as for the worſe, and to reſtore as well as to deſtroy health.

And, indeed, this is a direct conſequence of what has been juſt obſerved. For as the blood and ſpirits may be ſet in motion by impreſſions made on the mind, it muſt be allowed that ſuch motions, according to their different determinations to particular parts, will remove or bring on diſeaſes. Nay I ſhould even think, that it is much eaſier to account for relief being received, in this manner, by a diſeaſed

dare vehementes animi affectiones ſæpe experiuntur? Subitus terror multos interemit; & ipſa quando que ſupra modum exultans lætitia fuit exitio.

Medica Sacra, p. 70. See alſo Dr. Nichols's Anima Medica.

perſon, than to account for the alterations made on perſons in health. For by the operation of the paſſions of the mind on the ſpirits*, they may be ſo determined as to produce great alterations in the motions of the blood, and to communicate ſuch life and briſkneſs to it, as will have a natural efficacy to give relief under diſeaſes whoſe ſeat is in the fluids. By this means may the obſtructed canals be open-

* If I ſpeak improperly, I hope the learned faculty will excuſe the inaccuracy of one who is a ſtranger to the arcana of their profeſſion, on a point concerning which they themſelves are divided.—That a fluid, diſtinguiſhed by the name of *Spirits*, and *Animal Spirits*, and circulating in the nerves, is the immediate inſtrument, by means of which the mind acts upon the blood, and affects the habit of body, has formerly been the orthodox opinion in phyſic. But, it ſeems, modern refiners more inquiſitive and knowing, at leaſt, pretending to be more ſo than their predeceſſors, diſpute the exiſtence of ſuch a fluid at all, and in its place, have ſubſtituted certain vibrations of the nervous ſyſtem, &c. &c. Whether ſuch a fluid exiſts or no, is to my argument a matter of indifference; and when I make uſe of the term ſpirits, I mean the immediate inſtrument of the mind's action on the body, whatever it be; and which, though we ſhould confeſs our ignorance of its nature, muſt be at leaſt owned to exiſt.

ed, the ſtagnating juices may reſume their loſt circulation, and the relaxed ſolids recover that proper tone, which a ſound part, oppreſſed by too great a quantity of fluids, could not preſerve.

What appears thus agreeable to reaſon has been indiſputably confirmed by experience; and inſtances, unexceptionably well atteſted, of diſeaſes being alleviated, for a while, if not totally removed, by paſſions excited in the mind, by fear, by terror, by anger, by joy, may be appealed to, for the conviction of thoſe, who have not ſeen ſuch facts fall under their own obſervation.

A caſe of this kind, related by the *Count de Chavagnac*, in his Memoirs, to have happened to himſelf, occurs to me at preſent. The count, then a general in the Imperial army, was laid up in bed with a fit of the gout, when an alarm was raiſed of the march of the *Marechal de Turenne* to ſurprize their quarters. Though he

was not able, before, to move either hand or foot, the fear of falling into the hands of his countrymen the *French*, wrought a kind of inſtantaneous miracle on him. For he got out of his bed, dreſſed himſelf, and having placed himſelf in his coach, all this without help, he was conducted to a ſafe retreat *.

But how trifling an inſtance is this, when compared to the ſtory related of the famous *Monſieur Piereſque*, by *Gaſſendus*? The palſy had deprived *Piereſque* of the

* Mr. de Turenne ayant eté joint par ſon ſecours marcha pour enlever les Lorrains dans leur quartiers: Ceux ci en ayant eu l'avis, ſe retirerent toute la nuit. L'alarme fut ſi vive que Mr. de Lorraine, me vint trouver pour me dire que dans quatre heures Mr. de Turenne ſeroit a nous, et que Bournonville avoit donné rendezvous aux troupes à cinque groſſes lieües de la. Je ſouffrois cruellement dans mon lit et ne pouvois ſeulement mouvoir les pieds, ni les mains, tant la goute m'avoit ſaiſi. Mais la peur de tomber entre les mains des Francois fit un miracle ſur le champ. Car je me levai moi meme, in habillai, et mis dans ma caleche, d'ou l'on me conduiſit a Caſſel, ou j'avois envie de me retirer.

Memoires de Chavagnac, p. 332.

uſe of his right-ſide, and alſo of his ſpeech. Lying in this helpleſs condition, he received a letter from his friend *Thuanus* which he read with a degree of joy; and having, immediately after, heard a ſong, finely ſung, he was ſo tranſported with the ſweetneſs of it, that, like the ſon of *Cræſus*, eager to expreſs what paſſed within his breaſt, by words, he actually did ſo, by breaking out into an exclamation in praiſe of the ſong; and, from that moment, his paralytic members recovered their freedom and activity *. If we con-

* Corripuit illum (Piereſkium) inſignis quædam paralyſis, ad dextras omnes corporis partes. Scilicet extra limen Domus conſidebat, reclinatumque totum corpus forté habebat in dextrum femur, cum ſubito ſenſit ejuſmodi femur non leviter obſtupefactum. Conatus loco emovere, niſi adjuvante famulo non potuit, neque deinceps incedere ob ſimilem cruris, pediſque ſtuporem. Perrepſit continuo in brachium affectio, adeo ut ſcripſionis fuerit incapax. Serpſit et in linguam, quæ proinde hæſit, ac licet non nihil balbutire, murmurareve videretur, voces tamen diſtinguere, dearticulareque non potuit. Subiit quoque aurium tinnitus, qui, niſi aliis partibus ſimul ſolutis, non evanuit. Eſt autem facta ſolutio poſt exactam hebdomadem, occaſione hilaritatis, admirationiſque ſubnatâ. Cum allatæ nimirum

ſider *Gaſſendus*'s character, as a grave and ſerious philoſopher, and recollect the opportunities he had of informing himſelf as to the particulars of the life of *Pie-reſque*, who was his patron and with whom he generally lived, we muſt own that there is not the leaſt room for doubting the truth of this anecdote, which is a very remarkable confirmation of my hypotheſis —that the paſſions and affections of the mind can communicate health to the body.

But, as I obſerved before, in ſuch caſes as this, the verdict of the *phyſician* is more concluſive than the narration of the hiſtorian. And that we have the verdict of phyſicians confirming this concluſion of the mind's being able to relieve the diſ-

fuiſſent literæ a Thuano—lætitiâ quadam geſtiit ; & cum ſubinde neſcio quis hymnus in Lilii, Roſæque amores ſcité caneretur, ita captus eſt ſuavitate cantus et Strophes cujuſdam lepore, ut, quemadmodum Cræſi filius, prorumpere volens in aliqua verba, ac in ea ſpeciatim quam pulchrum hoc eſt! prorſus in illa proruperit, eoque momento libertas fuerit membris omnibus reſtituta.

Gaſſendi Opera, V. IV. P. 307.

caſes of the body, I may boldly affirm. If then the judgment of one, whoſe authority is as venerable, as his antiquity is great, be deciſive, as it certainly will be allowed, I can boaſt of having the illuſtrious father of phyſic on my ſide, and can quote *Hippocrates* expreſsly recommending it as being of great ſervice in certain diſeaſes, to excite, in the minds of the patients, impreſſions of anger, of fear, and the like *.—A judgment this, in which he is far from being ſingular, as it is ſupported in the ſtrongeſt manner, by *Aretæus* †, *Paulus* ‡, and *Galen* §, whoſe opinions I ſhall refer to in the notes.

* Επιτηδευιν οξυθυμιην εμποιειν και χρωματος αναληψιος ενεκα, και ευγχυμωσιος, και ευθυμιης; και φοβους, και τα τοιαυτα.

† Lib. I. de Cur. Morbis diutur. in morbis epilepticis, &c. conſulit οξυθυμιαν.

‡ Paulus ſeems to allude to the above quotation from Hippocrates when he ſays—δει δε και οξυθυμιας εμποιειν τοις αχροουσι τε και ατροφουσι, και συγκινησεις ψυχικας. L. 1.

§ Galen's remark on the above quotation from Hippocrates, is very judicious, and expreſſes clearly, the manner

What the phyſicians of the ancients, thus admitted, thoſe of modern times equally, confirm. — *Thomas Fienus* who wrote in the beginning of the laſt century, and whoſe book *de Viribus Imaginationis* has been already quoted, is as expreſs in his opinion that the imagination will cure, as we have ſeen in a former quotation from him, that it will cauſe diſeaſes.— His eleventh diſputation is on the very point, and he confirms his concluſion from the authorities of former phyſicians, from particular facts appealed to, and from arguments, which I need not repeat *.

in which the paſſions of the mind contribute to reſtore health. Επι γουν τινων εκλελυμενων σφοδρα οξυθυμιαν τινα τω αρρωστο ὁ θυμασιος Ιπποκρατης γινεσθαι συμβουλευει, ἱνα τω ευτονω της ὁρμης, το ατονον της εκλυσιος ιασωμεθα.

In Lib. de Theriaca.

* If Fienus be of this opinion, whence is it that I find him quoted by the late Biſhop of Litchfield, as follows. " It is a concluſion of Fienus, which he ſupports with ſeve- " ral reaſons, that the fancy or imagination cannot of itſelf,

But the efficacy of impreſſions made on the mind, in reſtoring health to the body, is no where more copiouſly inſiſted upon, than by *Pechlinus*, another eminent and more modern phyſician, in his *Obſervationes Phyſico Medicæ:* In that work we meet with ſeveral relations of cures effect-

" cure any diſeaſes, not even ſuch as are plain and ſimple, " ſuch as the hectic or dropſy, which he inſtances in." See Smalbroke's Vindication of the Miracles of Jeſus, vol. I. p. 226. When I read his lordſhip's book, which was long before I had ever met with Fienus, I concluded from the above ſpecimen, and the manner of its being applied, that Fienus denied that the imagination was of any efficacy in curing diſeaſes. But I find, from peruſing the book itſelf, that no author on the ſubject, attributed more to it than he does.—When he aſſerts, therefore, which he does in his 38th concluſion, p. 171, that the fancy cannot of itſelf, *per ſe*, cure diſeaſes, he means only to affirm (for his book abounds with ſchool diſtinctions) that it is only a remote cauſe of cures. For in his 32d concluſion he lays it down as follows—" Phantaſia ergo alterat & immutat corpora, " mediante motu humorum & ſpirituum—ex quo notan- " dum Phantaſiam eſſe cauſam valde remotam & per acci- " dens," p. 154. Fienus, therefore, by aſſerting that the paſſions of the mind can ſet the blood and ſpirits in motion admits all that I affirm; for no one ever imagined that the bare fancy, of itſelf, and without acting on its proper inſtruments, could cure diſeaſes.

ed in this manner. According to this author, fevers, agues, gouts, have been got the better of by exciting terror or ſurprize in the mind of the patients. And, what is ſtill more extraordinary, he mentions the caſe of a phyſician at *Hamburgh* cured, by this cauſe, of a rupture *. And

* Eſt nonnullorum ea conditio, ut ab animi effectibus magis quam ulla aliâ re commoveantur, acto ſtatim in effervescentiam ſanguine, aut plané compoſito; utramque autem terrori propium videtur, ut nempe iram vel metum participat. Quidquid demum id ſit, vehemens ejuſmodi affectus mutat, in totum, ſpirituum craſin, quâ mutata, etiam ſanguini novum induci habitum neceſſe eſt.—Febres plurimas quas remediis vulgatis fruſtra ſolicitari vidimus, terror nonnunquam ſanaverit.—Quartanas etiam, quis credat, utut lentas & pituoſas febres, terrore profligari vidimus —Piiſſimum virum cum quartanâ diu conflictatum, & hinc, Amſtelodamum, tendentem, vehiculi caſus, humerique luxatio a febre liberavit, terrore, haud dubié, craſin ſanguinis evertente.—Quam vero ſæpe etiam Arthritidem terror, metu permiſtus ſanavit?---Sed majus eſt ſolida ipſa terrore uti labefactari, ita & reſtitui in integrum. Medicum ego olim novi Hamburgi—Hic inter cætera, quibus adfligebatur mala, etiam herniâ laborabat plurium annorum carnosâ; hanc ipſam aliquot menſibus ante mortem terror percuravit, retracto, ad improviſum nuncium, in inguina tumore, nec poſtea amplius, res mira, viſo.

Pechlin, Obſ. Phyſico-Medicæ Hamb. 1692. p. 453 and 454.

if terror can perform ſuch cures, ſo alſo does he give us inſtances of ſimilar effects produced by joy. Two caſes, of a gout, and of an inveterate ague and jaundice, he relates as what he was witneſs of, himſelf, where health was reſtored to both patients (after every uſual remedy had been tried in vain) by the joy they felt on hearing good news. He alſo mentions the cure of *Conringius*, the famous *Juſpublicift*, on the authority of his ſon-in-law Dr. *Schelhamer*, who aſſured him that *Conringius* labouring under an ague, was cured, without the help of medicines, and merely by the joy he felt from a converſation with the learned *Meibomius* *.

* Vidi---ubi oblati conſulatus nuncium Titium a Podagræ doloribus, quos graves pertulerit, momento liberaverit, & ſui membrorumque potentem fecerit. Jam alii ex tertianâ laboranti diuturnâ Icterici ſque ſymptomatibus comitatâ, cum poſt plurium annorum ſterile conjugium, ad tertias acceſſiſſet nuptias ſexagenario vicinus, a nuncio nati ex juvenculâ conjuge filii conceptum gaudium, cum nihil hactenus profeciſſent remedia, lentem febrim ejuſque ſobolem, Icterum, feliciter profligaſſe et ipſe teſtis ſum.---Conringium etiam olim, incomparabilem virum, & πολυμαθέστατον, ex

After what has been offered, then, on this head, you cannot, I think, be ſo incredulous as to doubt that diſeaſes, of the moſt obſtinate kind, may be, and have been, cured, at leaſt alleviated, without the application of the ordinary remedies, but, merely by the operations of paſſions excited, or impreſſions made, on the mind of the ſick perſon.

If, therefore, I can now ſatisfy you, that the above general reflections are applicable to the particular caſes of thoſe who received benefit by praying at the *Abbé Paris*'s tomb, and that they had their minds properly diſpoſed, by ſuch impreſſions made on them—I think I ſhall have ſufficiently eſtabliſhed the truth of my propoſition, that the facts attributed to the miraculous interceſſion of the *bleſſed*

tertianâ ægrotantem, non remediorum apparatus, ſed conceptum ex magni Meibomii ſermonibus gaudium unicè reſtituit, quod ex inſignis ejus generi, D. D. Schelhameri fide habeo.

Pechlin, Ob. P. 466, 467

deacon, were brought about by natural cauſes.

The firſt and moſt obvious reflection is this, that the diſeaſes were of ſuch a nature as could be overcome by the action of the mind on the body. From the inſtances juſt quoted, we may obſerve that gouts, palſies, fevers of all kinds, and even ruptures, have been thus cured: And that, in general, all diſeaſes, ariſing from obſtructions and other diſorders in the blood and ſpirits, may be thus relieved. Now it is obvious from the account we have given of the cures attributed to the *Abbé Paris*, particularly of thoſe where the change wrought on the health was ſudden, viſible, and made at the tomb* (which are the only ones to the purpoſe) that they were of a ſimilar nature; and,

* Couronneau, Sergeant and Hardouin were paralytic; and Thibault and Du Cheſne's diſorders aroſe from obſtructions which put on the ſymptoms both of the palſy and dropſy.

therefore, could be brought about by ſimilar cauſes.

It is alſo to be obſerved, that the cures in queſtion, were performed on perſons whoſe minds were neither under any natural, nor under any accidental incapacity, of affecting the habit of the body. They were all grown up to ſuch a maturity of age, that impreſſions of every kind were capable of being made on their minds.

But though it appears from this, that the cures performed at the tomb of our Abbé might poſſibly have been effected by impreſſions made and paſſions excited in the mind, yet, that there may not remain the leaſt doubt that they ought to be attributed to this cauſe, I ſhall now proceed to obſerve that the ſupplicants who received any benefit, *actually* had their minds ſo prepared and diſpoſed, and ſuch paſſions excited in them, as were likely to have an effect on the habit of

the body, and relieve them under their diſtreſs.

What, then, was this affection of the mind, and of what kind were thoſe impreſſions, under the influence of which the ſupplicants in *St. Medard*'s churchyard were, at the time when they received relief?—An enthuſiaſtic perſuaſion, of the efficacy of the means they made uſe of; an unſhaken confidence of ſucceſs, and a vaſt expectation that they were to be cured by the interceſſion of the ſaint they prayed to.

That the patients who received benefit at our Abbé's tomb, were actually under the influence of ſuch a diſpoſition of mind, is not to be doubted. For we cannot conceive that a higher inſtance of veneration can be aſſigned, than the offering up of prayers; and they who came to the tomb, for the expreſs purpoſe of demanding the interceſſion of our ſaint, certainly came to it prepoſſeſſed with an high opinion of

his ſanctity, and firm belief of his power. —Their minds therefore being thus heated and inflamed, and every faculty of their ſouls burning with the raptures of devout joy, and enthuſiaſtic confidence, muſt it not appear far from being impoſſible, after the inſtances we have aſſigned above, that in ſome caſes, a change might be wrought on the habit of the body? The paſſions and impreſſions which prompted them to apply to the Abbé in prayer, are not unſimilar to thoſe which could convert a letter and a ſong into a medicine curative of *Piereſque*'s palſy, and the converſation of *Meibomius* into an effectual remedy for the ague of *Conringius*.

That the eager confidence of the patient in the ſkill of his phyſician, and the firm expectation of relief by his means, have ſometimes a wonderful efficacy in reſtoring health, is a point not to be doubted of. *Fienus* already quoted, beſides corroborating this opinion by the authority of *Galen* and others, tells us

that, in general, all phyſicians ſubſcribe to it; and he gives us ſeveral inſtances of cures brought about by the uſe of means, in themſelves of no efficacy, if not ridiculous, nay which to all appearance were hurtful, but which the ſtrong deſire and confidence of the patients endowed with a ſanative virtue*. *Pechlin* alſo is very full, to the ſame purpoſe. In his opinion, vaſt is the power of the mind in determining the operation and efficacy of medicines. It will, according to him, not only diminiſh or increaſe their uſual effects, but alſo change them to a manner of operation directly contrary; and communicate a healing quality to the moſt inadequate means, even to a bread pill diſguiſed as a medicine, and ſwallowed with a vaſt confidence in the ſkill of the perſon who adminiſters it†.

* De Viribus Imaginationis, p. 169—170.

† Adeo in remediorum effectibus moderandis, variandiſque multum quoque imaginationem poſſe, experimentis didici: nunc etiam auget, nunc minuit, nunc etiam alio

If then, in the judgment of phyſicians, the confidence of the patient, can give efficacy to remedies in themſelves inſufficient, why ſhould it be thought at all more extraordinary that a ſtrong confidence and expectation of relief, ſhould operate in ſuch a manner upon ſome of the ſupplicants of the *Abbé Paris*, who may be conſidered as their phyſician, as in ſome few caſes, to give a medicinal and healing virtue, to their proſtrations and prayers at his tomb, and to convert the holy earth applied externally, or drank, mixed with water, into an efficacious remedy?

What has been already offered certainly warrants us to account for the cures now before us, in this manner. However, to make our concluſion ſtill more indubi-

atque alio convertit medicaminum efficaciam.---Obſervavi medicaminum facultates ab imaginatione ad illum effectum determinari quem quiſque ſibi animo, certo eo, atque obſtinato, fingit, &c. &c.

Pechlin, Obſ. P. 421---422.

table, ſuffer me now to obſerve, that from the accounts which we have, of the circumſtances attending the prayers of thoſe who received relief at the tomb of the *Abbé Paris*, we are certain that the *enthuſiaſtic* confidence with which their minds were impreſſed, *actually* did affect their bodies in ſuch a manner, as to become a cauſe, the operation of which had a viſible tendency, and remarkable efficacy, to work a favourable change on their health.

That *enthuſiaſm* ſhould warm its votaries to a holy madneſs, and excite the wildeſt tranſports and agitations throughout their whole frame, is an effect which in a country ſo fruitful of this production as is ours (though enthuſiaſm be the product of every ſoil and of every religion) muſt be conſiſtent with the experience of many. I myſelf, have ſeen the ſinging of pſalms have ſo violent an effect on an enthuſiaſtic devotée, that, being heated to a frenzy, ſhe trembled with agony, in a manner foamed at the mouth, and uttered

ſuch hideous cries that it became neceſſary to gag her, and carry her out of the public aſſembly where this happened *. But ſuch *phænomena* are, I believe, extremely common in the tabernacles of the fanatic *Methodiſts* †, as they have been, before, amongſt their predeceſſors the French

* This was at Ghent in Flanders during the winter of 1744, in one of the places aſſigned to the Britiſh troops (who then compoſed the garriſon of that city) for their public worſhip. The poor woman, wife of a ſoldier belonging to the Welch Fuſileers, came next morning to me (as I had been the chaplain who then officiated) aſking pardon for having been the occaſion of interrupting the ſervice of the church, by her tranſports, and aſcribing what had happened to her, to a divine impulſe.

† The journals and other works of Weſley and Whitfield furniſh an inconceivable number of moſt curious inſtances of this kind, amongſt their miſled followers. But as the writings of theſe gentlemen, already almoſt as much forgot as if they had never been publiſhed, may be difficult to be met with, the reader will have full ſatisfaction, by conſulting that excellent treatiſe, *The Enthuſiaſm of Methodiſts and Papiſts compared;* in which the folly and abſurdity of Methodiſm are ſo clearly pointed out, that it is amazing ſo many, who would neither be thought deficient in ſenſe, nor miſtaken in their notions of religion, ſhould ſtill continue under this ſtate of ſuperſtitious enchantment.

prophets: and ſuch were the uſual ſpectacles furniſhed to the public, for ſeveral months, in the church-yard of *St. Medard*, and particularly, by thoſe very perſons whoſe cures are boaſted of.

The paſſions of the mind, as we have obſerved, operate on the body, ſolely, by communicating certain motions to the blood and ſpirits. And hence it is that this cauſe has ſo few ſtriking effects, as it can act only by the intervention of inſtruments, over which its power, in moſt caſes, is very limited. But when theſe inſtruments obey, when the paſſions and impreſſions made on the mind can excite ſuch a ferment throughout the whole frame of the body, as was uſual amongſt the ſupplicants of the *Abbé Paris*, then may we pronounce with a certainty, that, in ſuch circumſtances, if ever in any, impreſſions made on the mind will be able to work a change on the health. For in this caſe, we are certain, that the nervous ſyſtem is ſtrongly acted upon, and that

freſh and violent motions are communicated to the fluids: and it is obviouſly a concluſion which common ſenſe will dictate, and which no one ever diſputed, that whatever can have this effect, muſt have a natural tendency to give relief in a variety of diſeaſes whoſe cauſe may be traced from obſtructions, and other diſorders in the ſtagnating fluids and inactive nerves.

It is on this principle that phyſicians account for a palſy being cured, by an attack of a fever; inſtances of which are to be met with in their practice. For as the cauſe of a palſy is an impeded influx of the ſpirits, that fill the nerves, into the muſcles; or of the arterious blood into its veſſels, it is not to be wondered at, that the accelerated motions communicated to the ſpirits and blood by a fever, ſhould, ſometimes, be able to remove another diſeaſe which had ariſen from obſtructions of them. And if a paralytic diſorder may be cured in this manner, can there be any reaſon for refuſing the ſame efficacy to the

convulſions and agitations of *Sergeant*, *Couronneau*, and *Hardouin*; as ſuch agitations neceſſarily ſuppoſe that the velocity of the fluids of their bodies was greatly accelerated? *

Again; as one of the curative indications of a dropſy is an evacuation of the water by perſpiration, and as the medicines adminiſtered by the phyſician aim to produce this effect; need we be ſurprized

* Montgeron, in deſcribing the circumſtances of the cures of his paralytic miraculés, tells us of their nerves being ſeen, by the ſpectators, to vibrate under the ſkin, nay heard to crack, with the violence of the motions communicated to them.—Motions which, of courſe, would excite ſuch a ferment in the fluids, as might eaſily remove thoſe obſtructions which occaſioned their diſeaſe. Had the Methodiſt woman, whoſe tranſports I was a ſpectator of, laboured under a like complaint, the violent motions communicated to her nerves, might probably have given her relief. And had this happened, her friends the Methodiſts would, no doubt, have boaſted of this as a miraculous cure, and with as much reaſon as the votaries of the Abbé Paris did, in aſcribing to his interpoſition, the relief received by ſome of his ſupplicants, which we ſee can be ſo eaſily accounted for in a natural way.

that the dropſical ſwellings of *Thibault* and *Du Cheſne* ſhould decreaſe, when we learn from the certificates which are preſerved by *Montgeron*, that the ſweat run from them, at the tomb, and after they returned home, in vaſt quantities? And what could be more likely to excite ſuch copious perſpiration, than the enthuſiaſtic tranſport with which they prayed, and the convulſive ſtruggles which ſhook their whole frame?

Upon the whole then of this argument.—As it appears that none of the cures aſcribed to the miraculous interceſſion of the *Abbé Paris*, can be pronounced beyond the reach of natural cauſes; as I have aſſigned, from hiſtorians and phyſicians, inconteſtable inſtances of changes wrought on the habit of the body, by the operation of impreſſions made on the mind—changes as remarkable and uncommon as any of thoſe wrought on *Montgeron*'s ſuppoſed *miracules:* As, farther, I have pointed out the particular impreſſion which was

made on the minds of theſe perſons, *viz.* an enthuſiaſtic confidence in the efficacy of praying to the ſaint: and as, laſtly, we have ſeen that this impreſſion actually excited tranſports, extacies and convulſions, which had a natural tendency to remove obſtructions in the fluids, and conſequently to give relief under diſeaſes ariſing from this cauſe; from all theſe conſiderations, I think we may infer unexceptionably, that natural cauſes have been pointed out adequate to the production of the facts, which the credulous admirers of the *Abbé Paris* aſcribed to his miraculous interpoſition*.

* I will not pretend to exclude the operation of other natural cauſes, beſides that which I have inſiſted upon. In ſome caſes, perhaps, perſpirations, which might give relief, were excited merely by the great heat to which the ſick perſons were expoſed, by being ſurrounded by vaſt crouds of ſpectators at the tomb, in a hot ſummer-day. In this manner the Archbiſhop of Sens accounts for the cure of one Mary Magdalen Maſſaron, a paralytic ſupplicant.—In another caſe, an effort made to kneel was ſufficient to cure a lameneſs in the knee of one Mr. de la Salle, who going to the tomb with his ſick wife, whom the ſaint could not cure,

However, for your farther conviction, ſuffer me to make two or three obſervations which will add ſtrength to my concluſion, that there was nothing ſupernatural in the facts now before us.

Firſt, then, it is certain from *Montgeron*'s book that the cures performed in St. *Medard*'s church-yard, were not ſo cloſely connected with application to the bleſſed deacon, as to exclude the operation and intervention of adequate natural cauſes. Had our Abbé's ſupplicants never applied to him but once; and had every one, who

returned home freed from a lameneſs with which he had been afflicted, in conſequence of a broken thigh which had not been well ſet. This was one of the moſt remarkable, as it is one of the beſt atteſted cures performed in St. Medard's church-yard. And Mr. de la Salle was ſo peſtered with inquiries into the reality of the ſuppoſed miraculous cure, that he was glad to get a certificate from two eminent ſurgeons Meſſrs. Petit and Pibrac, which robbed our ſaint of the honour of it, by obſerving that his lameneſs had been owing to this—That the fibres of the tendon formed by the reunion of the muſcles after his thigh was broken, had not been altogether ſeparated; and that this ſeparation had been effected by the effort he made to kneel, at the tomb.

did apply, received benefit, the very inſtant of his application; this remarkable concurrence of the prayers and of the cures might perhaps have favoured the opinion that the perſon prayed to, interpoſed. But the reverſe of this is the caſe. For repeated applications to the ſaint were made by thoſe whoſe cures are alleged as inſtances of his miraculous interceſſion; and not only days, but weeks, nay months intervened between the firſt application, and the relief received: which circumſtances have but a very unfavourable aſpect, when we compare them with the ſuppoſition that the ſaint contributed any thing to this relief *.

* Don Alphonſo began his neuvaine to the Abbé on the 25th of June, and was not cured till the 2d of July. Thibault commenced a ſupplicant on the 11th of July, and though ſhe received great benefit at the tomb on the 19th, yet her legs continued ſwelled till the 28th. Couronneau had been a long while a patient of our ſaint; for ſo early as the 26th of March we find her at the tomb, but without ſucceſs; a ſecond experiment in April was equally ineffectual, and it was not till the 13th of June that ſhe received benefit. Du Cheſne began a neuvaine in June, without

If it be alleged that the cures of ſome of the ſupplicants correſponded ſo exactly with *an* application to our *Abbé*, although not the *firſt* application, that it would be unreaſonable to look about for the intervention of any natural cauſes :—In anſwer to this let me obſerve, that though a ſudden change was wrought on ſome of the patients, during their devotions at the tomb ; yet, before there can be any reaſon for aſſigning the interceſſion of the *Abbé* as the cauſe of this, we muſt be certain that no cauſes, naturally adequate to produce this change, intervened between the time of their being brought to the tomb,

effect, and having tried another, which began on the 16th of July, was not cured till the 21ſt. Sergeant began his application, July the 8th, and was not cured till the 10th, and even not then, completely, for his paralytic arm and leg did not recover their fleſh till ten days after. Peter Gautier, was a long time an unſucceſsful patient, having tried four neuvaines. Louiſa Coirin's cure was gradual through the months of Auguſt and September. And, laſtly, Louiſa Hardouin, who was cured on the 2d of Auguſt, had been directing her prayers to the Abbé for ſome days before. All theſe facts are furniſhed us by Montgeron.

and the inſtant when the change was effected. But ſo far are we from being certain of this, that, on the contrary, I have pointed out the particular cauſe that did intervene—viz. Violent motions communicated to their ſpirits and blood, by the agitations and tranſports to which the ſupplicants were wrought up by their enthuſiaſtic devotion. However ſudden the change wrought upon their health was, ſufficient time was ſtill left for the operation of this cauſe, which I have aſſigned as the cauſe which, indeed, did operate.

Another circumſtance, which excludes a ſupernatural interpoſition from having any ſhare in the cures attributed to the *Abbé Paris*, is this, that moſt, if not all of them, were far from being complete. This was remarkably the caſe of *Thibault*. For not to mention that her weakneſs, after the decreaſe of her dropſical ſwellings, was ſo great as to confine her to her bed, for ſeveral days, it appears alſo from a letter of Mr. *Silva*, firſt phyſician to the

Duke of *Orleans*, that after all the benefit ſhe boaſted to have received, ſhe continued deprived of the uſe of two of her fingers; in which ſituation Mr. *Silva* ſays he could not look upon her as one that had been cured *.—But we have the moſt remarkable inſtance of an imperfect cure in the caſe of *Don Alphonſo*. This young gentleman had loſt one eye entirely, and was only threatened with the loſs of the other. What then was the cure, ſaid to be wrought? Did the loſt eye recover its ſight? No ſuch thing, it ſtill remained dark, and the benefit was confined to a removal of the inflammation from the other eye. A cure left thus imperfect, has but little pretenſion to be looked upon as miraculous; becauſe its being ſo imper-

* Elle remuoit le bras qui ſelon ce qu'elle me dit avoit eté long tems ſans mouvement, et elle remuoit auſſi le poignet et pluſieurs doigts; mais il y en avoit deux, qu'elle étoit dans l'impuiſſance de plier. Vous ſentez, Monſieur, que les choſes etant en cet etat, je n'ai pu regarder Mademoiſelle Thibault comme etant guerie.

N° 29 of the Certificates of Thibault's cure, in Montgeron.

fect naturally points out a failure of power in the cauſe which brought it about.

Again; if we conſider that, in ſome of the caſes, the relief received was only *temporary*, this, which could not but happen if the cauſe I have aſſigned really operated, is inconſiſtent with the ſuppoſition that Omnipotence interpoſed. That there were relapſes into all the former ſymptoms is a fact as notorious and inconteſtable as it is that any relief was ever received at all, and which, were it neceſſary, could be confirmed by deſcending to particular inſtances *.

* This happened in the caſe of Don Alphonſo. The Archbiſhop of Sens in his *Inſtruction paſtorale*, produces letters and certificates from Madrid, (for which place the young man ſet out, ſoon after his cure) in which the return of the inflammation in his eye is affirmed. One letter to this purpoſe from Don Francis Xavier de Ximenes, dated December the 4th, 1731, ſays that the miracle was treated as a chimera at Madrid, and that the cure of the young gentleman aroſe partly from the medicines he had uſed, and partly from his having intermitted his ſtudies, but that the cure was not laſting, the diſorder returning whenever he re-

The pretenſions of the cures, in queſtion, to be miraculous, will be ſtill farther invalidated, if we conſider that the number of unſucceſsful votaries to our ſaint vaſtly exceeded the number of thoſe who received any benefit. This I mention as an indiſputed fact, a fact acknowledged even by the admirers of the *bleſſed deacon*, and which, had it been attended to, as it ought, would have of itſelf undeceived every one, as to the pretended miraculous nature of any of the cures.

That out of thouſands of fanciful, enthuſiaſtic ſupplicants (and that they were thus numerous cannot be denied) ſome

fumed his books. But this is not all. The Archbiſhop of Paris, in the ordonnance addreſſed to his dioceſe, dated November the 8th, 1735, publiſhed a certificate ſigned by Don Alphonſo himſelf on the 5th of November, 1734, in which he repreſents his own cure as very imperfect, and attributed what little relief he had received, to a remedy which an oculiſt had applied to his eye, three or four times, the day preceding his going to the tomb. To this, the Archbiſhop adds two other certificates, one of them ſigned by Don Alphonſo's uncle, to the ſame effect.

few, by means of the agitations to which they were wrought up, ſhould receive ſome benefit in certain diſeaſes, we may account for, and I hope have accounted for, in a natural way. But if we have recourſe to a *miraculous interpoſition* as the cauſe that acted, that far the greater number of ſupplicants ſhould receive no benefit, will be a difficulty not eaſily to be ſolved. It will be natural for one to reaſon with himſelf: why, of ſuch multitudes, who had recourſe to the *Abbé Paris*, has God aſſiſted ſo few? If, as his admirers pretend, the miracles were deſigned to convince the world that the *Abbé* had died in a ſtate of favour with God, and conſequently that the appellants from the bull *unigenitus* had been erroneouſly condemned, did not this reaſon hold good to the cure of every one who ſhould aſk it through his interceſſion? And did it not hold good alſo to the cure of all manner of diſeaſes, even thoſe impoſſible to be cured by natural means? Had any ſuch cures been per-

formed, that a ſupernatural cauſe interpoſed, could not have been denied. But it is notorious that the reverſe was true, ſo that I ſee not how the defenders of the miraculous nature of the facts before us, can evade the force of the objections above hinted at *.

* Of all the ſupplicants to our ſaint, the *Abbé de Beſcheran* was perhaps the moſt generally taken notice of, at the time, over all Paris, as he certainly was the moſt conſtant in his devotions and agitations. This gentlemen's left leg was about five or ſix inches ſhorter than his right one; and full of confidence that the bleſſed Deacon's power could lengthen it to its proper meaſure, he continued his prayers at the tomb, about ſix months. During this whole time, he had his leg meaſured every day, and daily reports of its lengthening, were propagated. But alas! when the tomb was ſhut up, he was ſtill lame, and is, at preſent (if he be not dead within theſe three or four years) known at Paris, by the name of the limping Abbé, *L'Abbé boiteux*. The Abbé had made himſelf ſo well known, that the bad ſucceſs of his application greatly diſtreſſed the friends of our ſaint; however they were not without an anſwer, which they thought ſufficient. They granted, indeed, what every body ſaw, that the Abbé ſtill continued lame, but if we would believe them, he was not ſo lame as he had been, for that, during his ſix months attendance at the tomb, the ſhort leg had grown ſomewhat longer, and that it was likely it would, by degrees, have grown to the length of the other, had not

And now, Sir, I flatter myſelf, thatthis long, prolix, though neceſſary examination into the facts aſcribed to the ſupernatural interpoſition of the *Abbé Paris*, has been of ſome weight in inducing you to admit that every thing happened in a natural way.

However, as familiar examples are more convincing than the ſhrewdeſt reaſons; that the ſeeming inſufficiency of the cauſe to which I have aſcribed theſe cures, may not incline you ſtill to doubts and ſuſpicions, it will not be foreign to my purpoſe, and, at the ſame time, it cannot but be entertaining, to mention one or two inſtances of cures equally extraordi-

the civil magiſtrate interrupted the operation of the miracle, by walling up the tomb.—In ridicule of this pretenſion, I have ſeen a whimſical calculation of the time which the *Abbé de Beſcheran*'s complete cure would have taken up. Reckoning the ſhort leg to have lengthened the 24th part of an inch in ſix months, if it had continued to lengthen in the ſame proportion, he muſt have perſevered in leaping upon the tomb for ſeventy two years, before he could have obtained the whole deficiency of ſix inches.

nary with thoſe performed at the tomb of the bleſſed deacon, and which, though the means immediately connected with them were, to common apprehenſion, inſufficient to bring them about, are, notwithſtanding, looked upon by every body as effects that *may* be, nay, *muſt* be accounted for, without calling in the agency of any ſupernatural power.

And, firſt, let us conſider the cures of *ſcrophulous* diſorders by the *royal touch.* This diſeaſe is one of the moſt deſperate that the human body is ſubject to, and in moſt, if not in all caſes, eludes the power of medicine. Now, that a touch accompanied with prayers, and the hanging of a medal about the neck, ſhould cure this diſeaſe, is as ſtrange and unaccountable, as that proſtration on the tomb of the *Abbé Paris*, ſhould cure a paralytic or dropſical diſorder. What then will you ſay in this caſe? Will you deny the facts?—This cannot be done without reſiſting evidence far from being contemptible. The kings

of *England*, for ſeveral hundreds of years, actually exerciſed their touch. Is it, therefore, to be imagined, if no cures had been obſerved to follow it, that an opinion of its efficacy could have been entertained for ſuch a length of time? This you will own to be, at leaſt, improbable. But that cures, in ſome caſes, followed upon the touch, we have the ſame reaſons for believing, as we have for believing that it was ever put in practice; becauſe the ſame writers who mention the latter, mention alſo the former circumſtance.—I ſhould enlarge beyond all moderate bounds were I to give quotations from our old hiſtorians in confirmation of this. It may be enough to obſerve that ſcarcely any of them who wrote during a period of at leaſt five hundred years, have omitted taking notice of this ſtrange fact. *Polydor Virgil* who publiſhed his Hiſtory of *England* in the time of *Henry* the VIIth, tells * us that, in his age, the kings of

* Solebat Edvardus Rex, divinitus, ſolo tactu ſanare ſtru-

England continued to exert this power of healing derived to them, as it were by hereditary right, down from the Confeſſor, the firſt who exerciſed it. And though Mr. *Beckett*, in his *Enquiry into the Antiquity and Efficacy of Touching for the Cure of the King's Evil*, attempts to prove, that there is no ſufficient evidence for believing that the kings of *England* began to exerciſe this ſuppoſed gift ſo early as the reign of *Edward* the Confeſſor *, yet

moſos, hoc eſt ſtrumam patientes—quod quidem immortale munus jure quaſi hereditario ad poſteriores reges manavit; nam reges Angliæ, etiam nunc, tactu ac quibuſdam hymnis, non ſine ceremoniis prius recitatis, ſtrumoſos ſanant.

Polydor. Virgil, Lib. VIII. Hiſt. Angl. 1.

* William of Malmſbury who (according to Mr. Beckett) lived about 80 years after the Confeſſor, is the firſt hiſtorian who aſcribes miracles to him; and from him, all our ſubſequent hiſtorians have derived the tradition that Edward the Confeſſor was the firſt king who touched for the ſcrophula. But the ſilence of Ingulphus, Edward's contemporary and acquaintance, and of Marianus Scotus, and Florence of Worceſter who, though not contemporaries, were, however, nearer his age than Malmſbury, ſhake the credit of his relation. And though Alexander the IIId's bull for canonizing this king, obtained about 200 years

is he obliged, himſelf, to own that the antiquity of this claim is very high. Particularly, he admits that *Edward* the Iſt, who reigned above four hundred years ago, actually did touch for the king's evil, nay he owns that *Petrus Bleſenſis*, Archdeacon of *Bath*, who wrote ſoon after the death of *Thomas Beckett*, Archbiſhop of *Canterbury*, poſitively aſſerts it as a fact, that our kings have the power of curing the *ſcrophula*, which will fix the antiquity of it, at leaſt ſo high as the reign of *Henry* the IId, and within near a century of the Confeſſor.—In the reign of queen *Elizabeth*, *Tooker* publiſhed his book * on this

after his death; and his life, written by Ealread Abbot of Rievaulx in Yorkſhire, about the year 1164, within a century of him, mention his having performed many miracles, yet they are ſilent, as to his being veſted with a peculiar gift of curing any particular diſeaſe more than another.—Theſe are the authorities which Mr. Beckett has collected, to prove that the ceremony of touching for the cure of the king's evil cannot be traced up, as has been generally aſſerted, to Edward the Confeſſor.

* The title of this book is, Chariſma, ſive donum ſanationis: ſeu explicatio totius quæſtionis de mirabilium ſanita-

ſubject; and though I ſhould give you a very bad opinion of my judgment if I agreed with this author in his *reaſoning*, yet I ſee no ground for refuſing to admit his *teſtimony*. However wild, and ſuperſtitious his notions be with regard to the cauſe of the cures, yet we ought not to pay leſs credit to his atteſtation of their certainty. Leaving him, therefore, with *Polydor Virgil* (and indeed all our monkiſh hiſtorians) to entertain himſelf with an opinion too abſurd to be refuted ſeriouſly —that the gift of curing this diſeaſe, by the touch, was veſted, as a privilege by Heaven, in thoſe who had been *lawfully inaugurated* kings of *England*, I proceed to conſider him as a witneſs of the facts, which happened in his own time, of the cures of perſons touched by *Queen Eliza-*

tum gratiâ, in quâ præcipué agitur de ſolenni & ſacrâ cui reges Angliæ, rité inaugurati, divinitus medicati ſunt, &c. &c.—by William Tooker, who according to Antony Wood, was originally Fellow of New College, and died Dean of Litchfield, 1620. His book beareth date 1597.

beth; and this particular takes up an entire chapter.

There he informs us, that many from all parts of *England*, of all ranks and degrees, were, to his own certain knowledge, cured by the touch of the queen: that he had converſed with many of them both before and after their departure from court, obſerved an incredible ardour and confidence in them, that the touch would cure them, and underſtood that they, actually, were cured. Some of them he met with a conſiderable while after, and, upon enquiry, found that they had been perfectly free from their complaint, from the time of their being touched. And, not content with theſe general atteſtations, he alſo deſcends to particular inſtances, mentioning the names of ſeveral perſons cured, the places of their abode and other circumſtances, which leave every unprejudiced reader at a loſs for reaſons to refuſe

aſſent to the facts* .—What has been obſerved with regard to Mr. *Tooker*, may be

* Permulti ſalutem conſequuti ſunt, quos omnes enumerare neceſſarium haud eſſet mihi brevitatem conſectanti; honorarium fortaſſis eſſet, & ſcribendi multi eſſent commentarii. Ex diverſis regni provinciis confluxère, ut requirerent morbi medelam, ex familiis nobilium, ingenuorum, tenuiorum oriundi, omnis ætatis, ſexus, ordinis, pro ſalute ſupplices facti, ex agris & pagis, ex municipiis, ex hac urbe Londino nullis laboribus, ſumptibuſve pepercerunt ut coram ejus majeſtate ſe ſiſterent. Quot ego vidi, audivique è borealibus partibus, & agro Eboracenſi, è locis maritimis, ex auſtrali, occidentali, orientalique parte regionis hujus inſulæ frequentes accurriſſe, ex ambabus Academis, et celebrioribus regni provinciis omnibus conveniſſe, quibuſcum ego nonnullis libenter & ſtudioſè contuleram, ante & poſt diceſſionem ex curia? Reperi autem incredibilem ardorem, fidem adipiſcendæ ſanitatis, & reapſe ſalutem comparatam beneficio regio intellexi. Quoſdam iterum poſtea offenderam interroganti an morbus recurreret, ingenuè foſſi ſunt mihi ſe perdiu ſaniſſimos eſſe ex illo tempore, liberatoſque penitus ab incommoditate morbidâ. In meâ patriâ, civitate Exoniâ, neminem latere poſſunt qui hodie viſuntur ab omnibus Joannes Capellus honeſti civis filius, & Appilini filia, ſanati ab hâc ſtrumâ. Norunt omnes in oppido Molton meridiem verſus Archidiaconatus Barum, concivem ſuum Joannem Sherlandium qui hodie vivit & valet, & palam profitetur, honoris ergo & grati animi officio ſemper devinctus, ſe nullum levamentum inveniſſe aliud quam ſacratiſſimarum manuum regiæ majeſtatis tactum, unde ſibi,

applied to Mr. *Wiſeman*. For though his reaſoning, with regard to the cauſe of the cures of perſons touched by our kings, be equally ſuperſtitious with that of *Tooker*, his atteſtation as to their certainty, is unexceptionable. His office of principal ſurgeon in king *Charles* the Iſt's army, and of ſerjeant-ſurgeon to king *Charles* the IId, after the Reſtoration, gave him the beſt opportunities of information, and his ſkill in his profeſſion made him leſs liable to impoſition. What then does he ſay? —"I myſelf (theſe are his words) have "been a frequent eye-witneſs of many "hundreds of cures performed by his "Majeſty's touch alone, without any aſ- "ſiſtance of chirurgery; and thoſe, many "of them, ſuch as had tired out the en- "deavours of able chirurgeons before "they came thither. It were endleſs to "recite what I myſelf have ſeen, and what

deſperatione fracto, ſalus obtigerat. Norim ego quandam ex familiâ antiquâ Turbervillorum fœminam, quæ jam totum decennium ſanata perſtitit ex illo morbo.

Tooker, Chap. viii. P. 103, &c.

" I have received acknowledgments of " by letter, not only from the ſeveral " parts of this nation, but alſo from " *Ireland, Scotland, Jerſey* and *Guern-* " *ſey* *, &c."

But not to dwell on evidence which, perhaps, may be looked upon as antiquated, if we come down to our own times, we ſhall find inſtances of theſe cures atteſted in the ſtrongeſt manner. I myſelf have met with a man who aſſured me, that *Queen Anne*'s touch, and the medal which ſhe hung about his neck (and which I ſaw about it above twenty years after) had cured him, when in a moſt deſperate way. But as a ſingle unnamed witneſs will, perhaps, meet with little credit, what will you ſay, when I name one whoſe atteſtation muſt be owned to be free from every ſuſpicion? I have in my eye the late *Mr. Dicken*, ſerjeant-ſurgeon to Queen *Anne*, a gentleman well known for eminence in

* See Wiſeman's Chirurgical Treatiſes, Vol. I. p. 387.

his profeſſion. That he had opportunies of knowing the truth muſt be allowed, for all who were to be touched, were firſt examined by him before they were brought to her majeſty; and he made no ſecret in bearing witneſs to the certainty of ſome of the cures. This atteſtation of his muſt be conſiſtent with the knowledge of many ſtill alive, and I relate it to you on the authority of a phyſician of the ſtricteſt honour and probity, who aſſures me that *Mr. Dicken* has declared to him, that he had, in his poſſeſſion great numbers of letters written to him by perſons of character and diſtinction, from moſt parts of *England*, atteſting the recovery of their relations, acquaintances and ſervants, who had come up to *London* to be touched, and thanking him for the trouble he had taken; that he himſelf could, from his own knowledge, affirm, that ſeveral who were touched received benefit, and, in particular, he related one caſe which I ſhall here mention. A woman came to him, begging that he would preſent her to be touch-

ed by the queen. As from her appearance, he had no great opinion of her character, he told her the touch would be of little ſervice to her, as he ſuppoſed ſhe would ſell her medal, which muſt continue about the neck to make the cure laſting. She promiſed to preſerve it; was touched; had the medal given to her; and ſoon after her ſores healed up. Forgetting her promiſe, and now looking upon the piece of gold as uſeleſs, ſhe diſpoſed of it; but, ſoon after, her ſores broke out once more. Upon this ſhe applied to Mr. *Dicken* a ſecond time, earneſtly entreating him, to preſent her again to the queen. He did ſo, and once more ſhe was cured.

Here then we have inſtances of one of the moſt inveterate diſeaſes being cured, without the application and uſe of any known, adequate means; in conſequence of the patients being touched and having a bit of gold hung about the neck, with prayers ſuitable to the occaſion; which means could have no natural efficacy to produce

the cure.—Shall we then ſay that the kings of *England* have had any ſupernatural gift conferred on them, and that the cures of perſons touched by them were ſo many miracles? This ſolution might, perhaps, paſs current in the age of *Polydor Virgil*, in that of Mr. *Tooker*, or in that of Mr. *Wiſeman*, but one who would account for them ſo, at this time of day, would be expoſed, and deſervedly too to univerſal ridicule *, How then do we account for

* This, in fact, has been the fate of a late writer of the *Engliſh* hiſtory, who ſeems to differ from Mr. *Tooker* only in this particular, that whereas the latter is of opinion that the kings of England had this gift of healing conferred on them in conſequence of their inauguration, (neque tam ingenitâ vi aliquâ a majoribus ſuis cum naturâ ſeminum & ſimilitudine corporum ac imitatione morum propagatâ, adnituntur id negotii, quam ſingulari munere divino, quod inauguratis potius contingit, ſuffulti, operantur ſanitatem, are Tooker's words, p. 87.) our modern champion of hereditary right, maintains that inauguration is not neceſſary in order to be veſted with this gift; and in confirmation of this opinion relates a ſtory (a diſputed one by the bye) of a cure performed by the touch of the Pretender, who had never been inaugurated.

See Carte's famous Note, in his 1ſt Vol. of the Hiſt. of England.

them? Very eaſily, we think, in a mere natural way. We ſay, as it never was pretended that the royal touch was beneficial in every inſtance when tried, that in thoſe inſtances when benefit was received, the concurrence of the cure with the touch might have been quite *accidental*, while adequate cauſes operated and brought about the effect; that, perhaps, the diſeaſes might have been in a healing way, and that at the time of being touched, either the ſtrength of the patient's conſtitution had brought his diſorder to a favourable criſis; or that a change of air, or exerciſe, or a new regimen, and other ſimilar cauſes, had begun the cure. Or if any of the caſes be attended by ſuch circumſtances as prevent our attributing any thing to the above-mentioned cauſes, ſtill we think that we need not call in a ſupernatural cauſe; for that the ceremony of being touched might be the occaſion of making ſuch cauſes; act, as would convey benefit to ſome of the patients in a way entirely natural: In a word, we have re-

courſe to the power of impreſſions made on the mind, and to the amazing effects which experience ſatisfies us they have upon the habit of the body, and ſay that the perſon touched, having his imagination heated with the religious ſolemnity of the ceremony, the dignity of the toucher, and other ſtriking circumſtances, this might fix a deep impreſſion on his mind, an impreſſion continued by the wearing of the medal, and which, in ſome caſes, might be a means of reſtoring health *. Some

* I ſhall greatly confirm what I have here aſſerted, by quoting the opinion of an ingenious ſurgeon, Mr. Beckett, who in his Enquiry into the Efficacy of Touching for the King's Evil, already mentioned, aſcribes the cures, in queſtion, to the impreſſions made on the minds of the patients, by their confidence of receiving relief. And that this cauſe could have this efficacy, he proves as follows.—" Moſt cer-" tain it is, in the diſeaſe I am ſpeaking of the blood abounds " with a viſcous juice, and moves ſlowly; it wants that " briſk inteſtine agitation of its particles that it ought to " have as a warm fluid, and ſuch as it enjoys in a ſound " and hale conſtitution, from whence obſtructions in the " glands, and other evils are wont to ariſe. But when the " imagination becomes fired with the hopes of a ſucceeding " cure, the whole maſs of blood becomes, as it were, irra-

one or other of theſe *natural* cauſes, we aſſign as ſufficient to account for the cures

" diated by the ſpirits contained in it; by which means " thoſe corpuſcles which make that fluid viſcous, or ropey, " or diſpirited, become eaſily diſengaged from the other " principles it was before blended with; and the whole maſs " being put into a more briſk and kindly agitation, may " force open the obſtructed canals, help it to throw off " the heterogeneous particles, and diſpoſe it to permeate, " as freely as it ought, thoſe veſſels that conſtitute the " glands, which would ſcarcely before, or but very ſpar- " ingly admit of it."

I know no objection that can be made to this method of accounting for the cures of perſons touched for the king's evil, but this, that children have been cured by the touch, in whom ſuch an imagination could not be ſuppoſed to be ſerviceable. This hath been particularly inſiſted upon by Dr. Heylin, who ſays he has ſeen great numbers of them healed.—But, Mr. Beckett well obſerves that the Doctor muſt be underſtood to mean, only, that he has ſeen them *touched;* for when he ſpeaks of ſuch numbers, no body can ſuppoſe that he gave himſelf the trouble of going ſo many miles, and ſo many ways, as he muſt probably have done, to enquire into the event. And this obſervation is confirmed by the following inſtance, which ſhews that the words *touching* and *healing* were, at that time, ſynonymous terms. Dr. Carr, in his Medicinal Epiſtles, mentions that King Charles the IId, in ſuch a certain ſpace of time *healed* 92107; which is the exact number of perſons he *touched* in thoſe years, as appears by the regiſter preſerved by the

of the *king's evil* by the touch, and the laſt mentioned of them, in particular, I have inſiſted upon as ſufficient to account for the cures aſcribed to the interceſſion of the *Abbé Paris*. The two caſes are parallel, except that a variety of diſeaſes were cured at the tomb of our ſaint, whereas the touch of our kings was never thought ſanative but of one:—A diſeaſe, however of a more obſtinate nature, perhaps, than any cured in St. *Medard's* church-yard.

But beſides the cures of *ſcrophulous* diſorders by the royal touch, we are able to produce inſtances of a great variety of diſeaſes of the moſt inveterate kind, the cures of which though cloſely connected with the uſe of means, ſeemingly inadequate, are not, however, aſcribed, by any one, to a ſupernatural interpoſition.

I have in my eye the famous cures per-

Keeper of his Majeſty's Cloſet, belonging to his Majeſty's Chapel.

formed by *Greatrakes*, a gentleman of ſome faſhion in the county of *Waterford* in *Ireland*, by the ſtroking of his hand. This perſon, according to his own account of himſelf, began in 1662 to have a ſtrange perſuaſion in his mind (of which he was not able to give a rational account to others) that the gift of curing the king's evil was beſtowed upon him: and, upon trial, he found, his ſtroking ſucceed. After this he ventured upon agues, and, in time, attempted all diſeaſes whatever. His fame having ſpread throughout *Ireland*, at the requeſt of the Earl of *Orrery*, he came over to *England* in January 1666, to attempt the cure of *Lady Conway* who was troubled with an obſtinate headach. He continued at *Ragley*, Lord *Conway's* ſeat in *Warwickſhire* about three weeks or a month, but could not, with all his ſkill, cure the lady. However, during his continuance at that place, great numbers all round the country flocked to him, many of whom were cured, while others received no benefit. From *Ragley* he removed

to *Worceſter* where his ſucceſs was ſo great, that his fame having reached *London*, he received an order from Lord *Arlington* Secretary of State, to come up to town. On his arrival he took a houſe in *Lincoln's-Inn-Fields*, and during a reſidence of many months there, very remarkable cures were performed; an account of * which, as alſo of himſelf, in anſwer to ſome calumnies of his enemies, *Greatrakes* publiſhed before he left *London*, and the cures there related, ſeem to have all the circumſtances neceſſary in order to eſtabliſh the credit of any matters of fact. The names of thoſe who were cured, their diſeaſes, the time when, the places where, and the witneſſes before whom the cures were performed—all theſe marks of a genuine nar-

* The title of this performance is as follows.—A brief account of Mr. Valentine Greatrakes, and divers of the ſtrange cures lately by him performed: written by himſelf, in a letter addreſſed to the Hon. *Robert Boyle*, Eſq. whereunto are annexed the teſtimonials of ſeveral eminent and worthy perſons of the chief matters of fact there related. London, 1666.

rative are to be met with in this book, which was, beſides, publiſhed on the ſpot, when the facts in queſtion lay expoſed to every one's enquiry; ſo that had there been any fraud it muſt have been diſcovered. But, indeed, no ſuch thing was, or could, be affirmed. The witneſſes, many of them at leaſt, are perſons of ſuch unexceptionable credit, good ſenſe, and learning, that, as we cannot ſuſpect they were impoſed upon, ſo we cannot ſuſpect they would impoſe. Beſides the certificates of many gentlemen of diſtinction *, we have alſo the atteſtations of grave divines †, and eminent phyſicians ‡, which laſt are not very ready in admitting

* The Hon. Robert Boyle, Sir Nathaniel Holbatch, Sir John Godolphin, Sir Abraham Cullen, Sir Charles Doe's ſon, Colonel Weldon, Alderman Knight, &c.

† Dr. Ruſt, Dean of Connor, afterwards Biſhop of Dromore; Dr. Cudworth atteſting the cure of his own ſon; Dr. Whichcote atteſting his own cure; Dr. Wilkins afterwards Biſhop of Cheſter; Mr. Patrick afterwards Biſhop; Dr. George Evans, &c.

‡ Sir William Smith, Dr. Denton, Dr. Fairclough, Dr. Jeremiah Aſtel, and others.

that cures may be effected, without making uſe of the medicines which they themſelves preſcribe.

Here, then, let me aſk, can any means be ſuppoſed more inadequate, to all appearance, to effect cures of diſeaſes, than thoſe made uſe of by *Greatrakes?* And, yet, nothing can be more certain than that there was no ſupernatural interpoſition in the caſe. The cures were effected gradually, and the operation of the hand was frequently repeated; in many caſes there was occaſion to make uſe of razors, and other ſharp inſtruments to lay open the ſores; the number of thoſe who received no benefit from him, after repeated trials, greatly exceeded the number of thoſe who were relieved: add to this, that very many who received benefit, received no cure, but ſoon relapſed into all their former ſymptoms. Theſe and other circumſtances, which can be collected from his own account *, ſatisfy us that *Great-*

* Greatrakes's book being now, in very few hands, I

rakes was no worker of miracles. But whether the concurrence of *Greatrakes's*

ſhall, for the ſatisfaction of the reader, tranſcribe one or two certificates, that he may ſee what diſeaſes were cured, and the manner of their cure. The following, then, is the certificate ſigned by Dean Ruſt.—" Being deſired to give " my teſtimony of Mr. Greatrakes and his cures, I do " hereby certify that I have with ſome curioſity been an " obſerver of him and of his operations: and I take him to " be a perſon of an honeſt and upright mind, a free and " open ſpirit, a cheerful and agreeable humour, an inoffen- " ſive converſation, of large and generous principles, and " that carries on no deſign of faction and intereſt. I have " been an eye-witneſs of many hundreds that have come " under his hands, eſpecially during his ſtay at Lord Con- " way's for three weeks or a month together, and I muſt " profeſs myſelf convinced (however it be from an imme- " diate gift, or a peculiarity of complexion) that he has a " virtue more than ordinary. For though I have ſeen him " touch many, with little or no ſucceſs, yet it muſt not be " denied that I have ſeen too, in very many inſtances, by " his ſpittle and the touch or ſtroke of his hand, humours " put into odd and violent fermentations, pains ſtrangely " fly before him, till he has chaſed them out at ſome of " the extreme parts of the body, the king's evil, in a few " days, wonderfully dried up; knobs or kernels brought to " a ſuppuration; humours ripened; ulcerous ſores ſkinned " and amended; hard ſwellings in women's breaſts abated; " cold and ſenſeleſs limbs reſtored to their heat and life; " ſcabs all over the body which have been for many years

ſtroking with ſome cures was only merely accidental, while other adequate cauſes

" and counted incurable, deadened and dried up; many " people relieved in caſes of deafneſs, lameneſs, dimneſs of " ſight; twenty ſeveral perſons in fits of the falling ſickneſs " or convulſions or hyſterical paſſions (for I am not wiſe " enough to diſtinguiſh them) upon laying his hands upon " their breaſts (often upon the top of their cloaths) within " a few minutes brought to their ſenſes, ſo as to be able to " tell where their pain lay, which he has followed till he " purſued it out of the body. I can ſay little to the perma- " nency of his cures; many, I do believe, continue firm, " but ſeveral of thoſe of the falling ſickneſs, I heard had " relapſed before I left the country, but after much longer " intervals than they were wont to enjoy.—The forms of " words he uſed are, *God Almighty heal thee for his mercy's* " *ſake:* and if they profeſs to receive any benefit he bids " them give God the praiſe, and that (ſo far as I can " judge) with a ſincere devotion. This is in ſhort, the " matter of fact, which is teſtified to be true by me."

" George Ruſt, D. D. and Dean of Connor."

I ſhall add a letter from the ſon of Sir Charles Doe, to Dr. Fairclough, relating his own caſe.

" Sir,

" Whereas you deſire to know what effect Mr. Great- " rakes's hand had upon me, this may ſatisfy you, that the " head-ach which I laboured under three or four years " (and uſed what means the phyſicians preſcribed though " unſucceſsfully) which oft times was very violent, was " cured by the laying on Mr. Greatrakes's hand in the fol-

operated; or whether, if his ſtroking had an efficacy, this was owing to ſome peculiarity in his complexion, to ſome ſingular virtue of certain *effluvia* from the

" lowing manner. About the beginning of March laſt, " hearing that Mr. Greatrakes was at my Lord Mayor's " houſe, I repaired thither unto him and deſired him (hav- " ing the head-ach then violently on me) that he would be " pleaſed to uſe his endeavours to cure me: Whereupon " he demanded in what part of my head the pain lay, which " I ſhewed him, and thereupon he laid his hand upon the " place affected, and immediately I found the pain removed " to another place in my head, which I alſo directed him " to, who purſued it till it went out of my head, and ſo " following it from place to place (laying his hand upon " that part of my body whither it did remove) till he drove " it into my foot, where it was very painful to me, till at " length, he chaſed it out at my toe, I not putting off my " ſtocking: which he did at two different times, the pain " as I conceived) being divided; whereupon I forthwith " found myſelf freed from all manner of pain both in head " and body, and have ſo continued ever ſince (bleſſed be " God) in perfect health. And not only was I freed from " the aforeſaid pain of the head, but alſo from a conſtant " bleeding that continually attended it, whereas I did uſe " to bleed every day (or every other day, at leaſt) which " bleeding I am very little troubled with. This is that, " Sir, which I affirm to be true, who am

" Yours, &c. &c.

" JOHN DOE."

body of the ſtroker; or whether impreſſions made on the minds of the perſons ſtroked, might not in ſome caſes, procure relief—I ſhall not take upon me to determine; but only obſerve that though the means immediately connected with the cures, were to all appearance, as inadequate as any can be ſuppoſed, yet there can be no pretence for having recourſe to ſupernatural cauſes to account for them; ſince, for aught we know, ſuch means may have ſome hidden efficacy, ſome peculiar ſanative virtue, (which, perhaps, was the caſe of *Greatrakes*'s ſtroke) or elſe, if they have no ſuch virtue and efficacy, they may prove the occaſion of exciting cauſes, known to be adequate, to act.

Upon the whole, then, the mighty wonders boaſted of by the admirers of the *Abbé Paris* loſe their gigantic appearance when examined cloſely, and I cannot help flattering myſelf that enough has been ſaid to convince *even* you, that the cures

performed in St. *Medard*'s church-yard have no more pretenſions to be eſteemed miraculous, than have the cures of thoſe *touched* by our kings, or of thoſe ſtroked by *Greatrakes*.

But I had almoſt forgot, that, in ſupport of the *bleſſed deacon*'s miraculous power, beſides the cures, *Montgeron* inſtances other facts, and particularly inſiſts upon his own converſion as a proof of it. That it may not, therefore, be ſaid that I have neglected any thing in the examination, I ſhall now relate this fact, as it really happened, and from *Montgeron*'s own account of it, you will perceive that he had not any reaſonable grounds for looking upon his own converſion as a miracle wrought by the interceſſion of the *Abbé de Paris*.

On the 7th of September, 1731, *Montgeron*, being at this time, as he tells us himſelf, both an infidel in principle and a libertine in practice, repaired to *St. Medard*'s church-yard, not out of devotion,

but with a deſign to examine narrowly the caſes of thoſe who ſhould come to aſk their cure. Scarcely had he entered the church-yard, when he was ſtruck with awe and reverence, having never, before, heard prayers pronounced with ſo much ardour and tranſport as he obſerved amongſt the ſupplicants at the tomb. Upon this, throwing himſelf on his knees, reſting his elbows on the tomb-ſtone, and covering his face with his hands, he ſpake the following prayer—*O thou! by whoſe interceſſion ſo many miracles are ſaid to be performed; if it be true, that a part of thee ſurvives the grave, and that thou haſt influence with the Almighty, have pity on the darkneſs of my underſtanding, and through his mercy obtain the removal of it.* Having prayed thus, many thoughts, as he ſays, began to open themſelves to his mind, and ſo profound was his attention, that he continued on his knees four hours, not in the leaſt diſturbed by the vaſt crowd of ſurrounding ſupplicants. During this time, all the arguments, which he even

heard or read, in favour of Chriſtianity, occurred to him with ſo much force, and ſeemed ſo ſtrong and convincing, that he went home fully ſatisfied of the truth of religion in general, and of the holineſs and power of that perſon, who, as he ſuppoſed, had engaged the divine goodneſs to enlighten his underſtanding ſo ſuddenly. —This is a fair repreſentation of *Montgeron's* converſion as related by himſelf, which, for the following reaſons, I think to have leſs pretenſions, than any of the cures have, to be looked upon as the effect of a ſupernatural interpoſition.

I would aſk, therefore, what certainty could *Montgeron* have, or how could he ſatisfy others that thoſe thoughts and reflections, which determined him to be a believer, were excited by the *Abbé Paris?* How could he diſcover that they were impreſſed on his mind from *above*, and were not the ſuggeſtions of his own fancy? And how ſhall we be able to ſatisfy ourſelves that the ſudden change of his

principles was really owing to the cauſe he aſſigns?—That there was nothing ſupernatural in the caſe; and that our convert was more indebted to the warmth of his own temper, than to the interceſſion of our *Abbé*, we ſhall have grounds for concluding, if we take a view of his character, as we are enabled to draw it from his own hiſtory of himſelf.

However odd it may ſeem, experience muſt ſatisfy us that a ſudden tranſition from the extravagancies of irreligion and libertiniſm to thoſe of devotion, is no uncommon appearance in life; and that many who have ſet out, at firſt, avowed ſcoffers at religion, have, in the end, run ſo far into the other extreme, as to be loſt in all the wilds of *enthuſiaſm*, the ſeeds of which have been in their minds, from the beginning. Strong paſſions, and a lively imagination, which often exclude all ſolidity of judgment, are ingredients which muſt concur in forming the viſionary devotee. Theſe ingredients may have, at

firſt proved, the cauſes of a man's irreligion, and of his abandoning himſelf to the greateſt irregularities in practice: and theſe very ingredients will be able to bring him back, and lead him as far one way, as they had done the other.—It being impoſſible for a man totally to baniſh all apprehenſions of an omnipotent Being, and future life, the infidel of the warm and fanciful turn of mind will often be deeply affected, and the terrors of the divine vengeance working on his pliable imagination, this may ſometimes be ſo effectual as to give his affections and inclinations a new bias, and make religion occupy the place of his luſts.—Now that *Montgeron* was a perſon of this viſionary and fanciful character, he himſelf ſatisfies us from the facts he relates. At the age of one and twenty, before which time he had begun to indulge his paſſions without meaſure, having diſguiſed himſelf in women's apparel, in order to get himſelf admitted into a convent, to perfect an intrigue begun with one of the nuns, and being on his way

thither in a chaiſe, the horſes, on ſome fright, overturned it, and he eſcaped much bruiſed, and with a broken arm. Looking upon this as a judgment from Heaven, he laid aſide not only his deſign of getting admittance into the nunnery, but alſo his profligate way of life, and put himſelf into the hands of a prieſt of the Oratory, who made him, as he tells us, read many good books. Soon after this he was ſo warm in his fit of devotion, that he ſhut himſelf up in the abbey of *La Trappe*, the monks of which order are remarkable for the ſeverity of their diſcipline. Having continued in this retreat about a month, a dangerous fit of ſickneſs obliged him to leave it, and, upon his recovery, his paſſions hurried him once more into all the exceſſes of criminal pleaſure, and from wiſhing that religion might not prove true, he, in a manner, perſuaded himſelf that it was all a cheat.—Yet, amidſt his irregularities, he was not eaſy in his mind. He had only endeavoured to make himſelf an infidel, but, in ſpite of himſelf, he was far

from being rivetted in these principles and the reports of the miracles performed at our *Abbé*'s tomb being the general conversation about town, he became greatly disturbed in his mind: because miracles, as he observes, could not agree with his system of infidelity. In this state of perplexity, he took a resolution to examine the truth of the facts reported, and accordingly repaired to our *Abbé*'s tomb on the day already mentioned: and what happened at that visit has been related.—Now that the fervour and vehemence of devotion, which he saw amongst the supplicants, should excite in him a serious frame of mind, is extremely natural, without supposing that the intercession of the *Abbé* contributed any thing towards it. How easily he could pass from the libertine to the saint, he had already shewn us, in shutting himself up with the monks of *La Trappe*. The company of enthusiasts is infectious; and it is no greater wonder, that one who had all the seeds of an enthusiastic devotion in his breast, should have them called

out on this occaſion, than that combuſtible matter ſhould take fire when touched by a flame. That he did not cool again, as he had done once before, can be eaſily accounted for. When he ſhut himſelf up with the monks of *La Trappe* he was young, and his appetite for ſenſual gratifications ſtrong and unſatisfied; no wonder, therefore, his fit of ſanctity ſhould leave him, at that time. But, now when the flame of devotion was rekindled at the tomb of the *Abbé Paris,* he was in the decline of life, his taſte for ſenſual pleaſures palled by long uſe, and his appetites jaded by indulgence. Temptations to his former vices, therefore, were leſs apt to entice him; and that, from this period, he continued a zealous devotee, is perfectly conſiſtent with the warmth and livelineſs of his paſſions, which only changed their object, from matters of ſenſe to thoſe of a ſpiritual kind, and found the ſame gratification in the latter, which they had done in the former.—In a word; *Montgeron* had no greater reaſon to look upon his con-

verſion as miraculous, than our Methodiſts have, who talk in the ſame ſtrain; who can tell you the exact hour, nay moment, when the *Holy Spirit* began to act upon their minds, who, if you will believe them, have their converſations with God, which they pretend to be able to diſtinguiſh from the rovings of their own fancies; dignifying the ridiculous ſallies of their diſordered imaginations, with the awful name of ſupernatural impulſes.—I ſhall only add, that the extravagancies into which *Montgeron* run, after his converſion, ſome of which you will find in the note *, give us

* Monſieur de Montgeron, being a counſellor of the parliament at Paris, was involved in a quarrel which that body had with the court in the year 1732, and, amongſt others, baniſhed to Auvergne. During his exile, which had only heightened his zeal for Janſeniſm, he conceived a deſign (the thought of which he ſeems to aſcribe to a divine impulſe) of collecting the proofs and atteſtations of the miracles of the favourite ſaint of his party. Full of enthuſiaſm he devoted himſelf as a martyr to Janſeniſm; and as he knew what dangers he expoſed himſelf to by this attempt, that he might prepare himſelf for ſuffering, beſides his faſtings, penances and other ſeverities, he drew up a form of prayer (a copy of which he gives us in his book) which he

a farther view of his character, and add ſtrength to our concluſion, that one of ſo

diſtributed among his ſect to be made uſe of for him.—On his being permitted to return to Paris he ſet about his work, and uſed uncommon diligence in collecting the letters, depoſitions, and certificates of the witneſſes of the ſuppoſed miracles; the originals of which papers he took care to depoſit with public notaries for every one's ſatisfaction; and he collected ſo many, that he aſcribes this to the immediate care of Heaven favouring and protecting his work. From theſe papers, he compiled his narrative of the cures, inſerting alſo the certificates abovementioned. The Archbiſhop of Sens's Paſtoral Inſtructions being the capital performance againſt our Abbé's miracles, Montgeron entitled his book an Anſwer to the Archbiſhop.—The book being, at laſt, printed in a pompous quarto, and dedicated to the King, he prepared himſelf to preſent it into his Majeſty's own hand. For eight days, he lay on a bed of aſhes; bread and water was his only ſuſtenance, and the whole period was ſpent in devotion.—On the 27th of July, 1737, having aſſembled his family, acquainted them with his deſign, and recommending himſelf to their prayers, he ſet out for Verſailles, and on the 29th he got an opportunity of preſenting his book into his Majeſty's own hands, to whom he, at the ſame time, made a ſpeech. The King, little verſed in ſuch matters, heard him with patience, and received his book in the moſt gracious manner; but was not a little ſurprized when, ſoon after Montgeron was gone, the Cardinal de Fleuri, being informed of the affair, told him that the author of the book muſt be impriſoned. Montgeron, being prepared for ſuffering,

viſionary a temper might be converted, in the manner he was, without ſuppoſing any thing ſupernatural in the caſe.

Let then, the ſceptical author of the *Eſſay on Miracles* make the moſt he can of the facts attributed to the *Abbé Paris*—what will this avail him? From what I have ſubmitted to your conſideration, it appears that though we admit the facts, we have it in our power to deny the conſequences; though we grant that ſome of the cures happened, yet are we able to give ſufficient reaſons for rejecting the claim of the *Janſeniſts*, to have their ſaint looked upon as a worker of miracles. This I ſay, we have it in our power to do.---I wiſh for the conviction of you and of your friends, it had been more frequently done. For I

nay even courting it, did not abſcond; but, after preſenting copies of his book to the Duke of Orleans, the firſt preſident of the parliament, and the chief magiſtrates at Paris, retired to his houſe, and waited with a kind of impatience till a letter de cachet came next morning, in conſequence of which he was carried to priſon, from which he never got out.

cannot but obſerve, that ſome of our defenders of Chriſtianity have not taken a very likely method, to evade the force of the argument drawn from the pretended miracles of the *Abbé*, in prejudice of the miracles of the Goſpel. The moſt common way has been to deny the facts, in general, as the production of fraud and impoſture. And yet, whoever attentively weighs the evidence urged in ſupport of ſome of them, muſt own that few matters of fact ever were confirmed by more unexceptionable teſtimony. They were performed openly, in the ſight of the whole world; in the heart of one of the greateſt cities in the univerſe; on perſons whom every body could ſee and examine; whoſe diſeaſes could not be counterfeit, becauſe we have the certificates of the moſt eminent phyſicians who had previouſly attended, or examined them; and whoſe recovery every inhabitant of the city of *Paris* could ſatisfy himſelf of, becauſe they lived on the ſpot. And that the facts

were * examined into with all the art and addreſs of the ruling part of the clergy,

* I cannot, therefore, avoid diſſenting from the learned Dr. Dodwell, who in his Free Anſwer to the Free Inquiry, (p. 132.) tells us as the reaſon why we muſt reject the facts aſcribed to the Abbé Paris, "That they were not offered "to public examination. Their enemies," ſays he, "durſt "not attempt a free inquiry like the Doctor's, leſt it ſhould "have ended in a reflection on their own cauſe. The court "which was, no doubt, ſatisfied of the fraud, choſe rather "to proceed by way of authority, than of argument, leſt "that method ſhould be carried too far, and a little pub-"lic examination might be demanded of thoſe miracles "which were wrought in favour of received doctrines." Now I much fear, this reaſon of the Doctor will not hold. For certainly if ever facts were freely inquired into, the cures performed in St. Medard's church-yard, were ſo. That many free inquiries were made into them, the Paſtoral Letters of the Archbiſhops of Paris, of Embrun, of Sens, of many Biſhops, an inundation of pamphlets of private eccleſiaſtics, and the repeated controverſies in the Journaux de Trevoux, and other periodical papers, ſufficiently prove. Nor is it leſs certain that if recourſe was had by the court to authority, it was only becauſe argument had been tried and found ineffectual.—Nor is the Doctor's reaſon why the enemies of the Abbé Paris durſt not attempt a free inquiry (viz. leſt this ſhould be carried ſo far as to affect the credit of the miracles wrought in favour of received doctrines) ſuch as will ſtand examination. For who were the enemies of the Abbé Paris's miracles?—Thoſe very perſons who by having

backed by the civil magiſtrate, is too notorious to admit of a diſpute, as it is alſo, that ſome of them could ſtand the examination, and remain undetected. So that to reject and diſbelieve *all* the cures, in

power in their hands, could, as they pleaſed, ſtop any diſagreeable inquiry; and by having the prejudices of the people in favour of the miracles admitted by themſelves, could have no reaſon to fear any detection of theſe; which were admitted alſo by the Janſeniſts who contended for our Abbé's miracles; ſo that the detection of theſe, could never endanger the credit of thoſe admitted by both ſides. Beſides, as the enemies of the Abbé Paris appealed to no new miracles in favour of received doctrines, the miracles they admitted could not be diſproved by any new evidence. Add to all this, that the intereſt of the oppoſers of the miracles of our Abbé, ſo clearly pointed out the expediency of detecting them, that it is not to be ſuppoſed they ſhould diſcourage a free inquiry into them—merely becauſe of a remote, poſſible conſequence—*becauſe, perhaps, a like public examination might be demanded of thoſe miracles, which were wrought in favour of received doctrines.*—Theſe are my reaſons for differing from the opinion of a gentleman whoſe labours have done ſo much honour to himſelf, and ſo much ſervice to the religion he profeſſes. And I am confident, that his candour will excuſe theſe remarks, which I ſhould not have made, had not I been obliged, by my argument, to aſſign a reaſon for rejecting the miraculous interpoſition of the Abbé Paris, entirely different from *that* mentioned by him.

general, as the offspring of fraud, muſt neceſſarily give the advocates of infidelity great advantage, and leave the Chriſtian in the labyrinth prepared for him, by puzzling him to aſſign reaſons why he believes the miracles of our Saviour, while he rejects thoſe aſcribed to the ſaint of *Janſeniſm.*

Others, again, finding, upon an examination of the evidence, that the certainty of ſome of the cures performed in *St. Medard*'s church-yard could not be doubted of, have admitted that they did happen, but have accounted for them by aſcribing them to the devil. A ſolution this, that can ſerve only to throw confuſion and uncertainty on the point controverted.—

But the method which I thought myſelf obliged to follow *, leaves nothing to be

* Before my firſt edition of this work in 1754, Mr. des Voeux had publiſhed his book, in which, as I learn from Dr. Middleton, he accounts for the cures ſaid to be performed on the ſupplicants of our Abbé, in the manner I have at-

objected, places the merits of the controverſy in the cleareſt light, and muſt for ever ſilence thoſe who would ſet up the cures performed in *St. Medard*'s church-yard, in oppoſition to the Goſpel miracles, which, as we ſhall ſee afterwards, are not liable to the ſame objections, becauſe in them a ſupernatural interpoſition will be ſhewn to be clear and indiſputable.—Before we proceed to the proof of this, however, it may not be improper to take notice of a few other noted pretenſions to miracles, which fall to the ground, in conſequence of the reaſoning which has overturned thoſe aſcribed to the bleſſed Deacon.

And this, in particular, is the caſe of the miracles pretended to, here in *England*, about forty or fifty years ago, by thoſe wild enthuſiaſts the *French prophets*. They were, all, cures of diſeaſes, all performed

tempted. As the materials in my poſſeſſion on this ſubject are very complete, my not having peruſed Mr. des Voeux's work, ſeems to be of little or no conſequence.

on perſons whoſe minds, heated with enthuſiaſtic tranſport, were in an apt diſpoſition to excite ſuch a ferment in the body, as might in ſome caſes not only change the ſtate of the fluids, but alſo brace the relaxed ſolids. Of all the ſtrange facts aſcribed to theſe prophets, the cure of *Sir Richard Bulkeley* of a rupture, ſeems the moſt proper to be ſingled out as an inſtance. That the cure really was performed, without the application of any new remedy, and in conſequence of prayer and the word ſpoken by the prophet, was not diſproved at the time, and was, ſoon after, ſeriouſly affirmed by *Sir Richard* himſelf, with all its circumſtances, to a gentleman ſtill alive, from whom I have my information. But though we may admit the fact, we deny the miracle. Remember the inſtance, quoted from *Pechlin*, of the cure of the *Hamburgh* phyſician's rupture, by the ſhock of a piece of bad news, and we ſhall not be at a loſs to point out a natural cauſe for the cure received by

Sir Richard *. That the cures attributed to theſe enthuſiaſts are to be accounted for in this manner, is evident from the bad ſucceſs they had when they pretended to perform what was indiſputably ſupernatural. The reſurrection of Dr. *Eames* is a well-known ſtory: on this event they fooliſhly (for all enthuſiaſts muſt ever expoſe themſelves) reſted the credit of their party; and this failing, we are unavoidably led to account for any ſucceſs they had in inferior inſtances, on principles that exclude all ſupernatural interpoſition.

Again; if the reaſoning concerning the

* Sir Richard's name was famous not only for his being cured in this manner, but alſo for his having drawn his pen in defence of the prophecies of his ſect; and for his attempting to obviate the objections which their agitations while they uttered them, and the failure of completion at the time marked, had juſtly given riſe to, by comparing the conduct of his prophets, with that of the prophets mentioned in the Old Teſtament. The reader may ſee, amongſt the tracts of Biſhop *Hoadley*, an excellent and maſterly Anſwer to Sir Richard's ingenious apology, which is, if I remember right, taken notice of by Lord Shaftſbury in his Letter on Enthuſiaſm.

cures performed in *St. Medard*'s church-yard, be of any weight, it will alſo overturn the pretenſions of the famous cure of Madame *de la Foſſe*, to be a miracle. This ſtory having made full as much noiſe at *Paris*, as did the cures at our *Abbé*'s tomb, it very well deſerves our notice here.

Anne Charlier, wife of *Francis de la Foſſe* a cabinet-maker, forty-five years old, had, for twenty years, been afflicted at different times with an iſſue of blood, which for the laſt ſeven years had given her very few intervals of eaſe. It being the cuſtom of the pariſh where ſhe dwelt *, to have an annual proceſſion on *Corpus Chriſti* day, through the extent of the pariſh to the church, Madame *de la Foſſe*, on the 25th of May, 1725, took a reſolution to get herſelf carried down to the ſtreet on the approaching feſtival, (which was to be on the 31ſt) and, as the proceſſion paſſed by, to aſk her cure by prayer to our Saviour,

* The pariſh of St. Margaret, in the Faubourg St. Antoine at Paris.

ſuppoſed to be preſent in the hoſt. She had thought of this the year before, but, by the perſuaſion of her Confeſſor, did not then execute her reſolution. However, ſhe was determined to try it now, having her mind fully prepoſſeſſed with an opinion that ſhe ſhould, by this means, recover her health. On the 28th, ſhe was carried to church, and received the ſacrament; and the 31ſt, *Corpus Chriſti* day, being come, ſhe was carried down ſtairs, being unable to walk, and was ſeated in the ſtreet in a chair, that ſhe might be ready when the proceſſion paſſed by. On its arrival, ſhe attempted to kneel, but, through weakneſs, fell from her chair on the pavement. Raiſing herſelf on her hands and knees, ſhe followed the proceſſion crawling thus on the ground, and crying out, *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canſt heal me;* ſome thinking her mad; others looking upon her to be drunk; while many pitied her. Having crawled about thirty yards, and finding herſelf left behind, ſhe endeavoured to riſe. At firſt,

ſhe raiſed herſelf upon her knees, and then, with help, got upon her feet, all trembling and giddy. And now ſhe cried out again with greater tranſport, repeating ſtill, the ſame words. Soon after ſhe perceived that her heart was fortified, that a glowing heat warmed all her limbs, and that her legs were able to ſupport her. For ſome ſteps ſhe leaned on thoſe who had lifted her up; but at laſt, finding herſelf ſtrong enough to walk without help, ſhe followed the proceſſion till it came to the church, which was above a mile from her houſe; and having by her earneſt importunity got a place near to the hoſt, ſhe entered the church with it; and, from that time, ſhe was ſenſible her complaint had entirely left her.

I have related the circumſtances of this fact, as I find them in a pamphlet which appeared ſoon after: and it was ſo well atteſted *, and ſo publicly canvaſſed, that

* The Cardinal de Noailles, who was then Archbiſhop of

I cannot ſee the leaſt room for doubting that it really happened. But that there was any thing in it miraculous, may very reaſonably be ſuſpected. The ſame cauſe which could give relief to the ſupplicants in *St. Medard*'s church-yard, will account for the benefit received by Madame *de la Foſſe*. From the printed account of her ſtory, ſhe appears to be a perſon of a warm, fanciful temper; that ſhe had wrought herſelf up to a firm perſuaſion that ſhe ſhould be cured by praying to the hoſt; and that her prayers actually excited in her, ſuch tranſports and emotions, as

Paris, having heard the reports of this cure, ordered a verbal proceſs to be taken concerning it, before his commiſſaries. And the whole tranſaction being eſtabliſhed on the evidence of a great number of witneſſes, he publiſhed it as a miracle, commanding a ſolemn thankſgiving, and te deum to be ſung, in all the churches of Paris. Madame de la Foſſe lived for ſeveral years after, was viſited by perſons of the higheſt rank, and even taken notice of by the King and Queen, who ſaw her at Verſailles. However, though ſhe was greatly relieved, her cure was not abſolutely complete. —See *Beauſobre*'s Remarks on it, in the *Bibliotheque Germanique*.

could reſemble the frenzy of the lunatic, or the wildneſs of the drunkard.—And when we know that theſe circumſtances attended her cure, need we be ſurprized that her relaxed blood-veſſels ſhould contract, and be reſtored to their proper tone? If the accelerated motions communicated to the nervous ſyſtem by a ſurprize, could cure the phyſician of *Hamburgh* of a rupture, or excited by joy, could remove the palſy of *Pereſque*—what reaſon can there be for doubting that thoſe excited in Madame *de la Foſſe* by her warmth of devotion, might cure her of an iſſue of blood?

I ſhould run into an endleſs enumeration of particulars, were I to take notice of all the inſtances of cures aſcribed to a miraculous interpoſition, which, upon an exact examination, will ſink down within the limits of nature, and may be accounted for, either by the ſame cauſe which brought about the cures in *St. Medard*'s churchyard; or elſe by ſuppoſing that the uſual remedies applied by the phyſician, or the

ſtrength of the patient's conſtitution, and other adequate cauſes operated, whilſt the honour of the cure is attributed to ſome ſaint who happened to be invoked. Ninety-nine miracles, in a hundred, of thoſe pretended to in latter times, by the Papiſts, are cures of diſeaſes; and I defy their advocates to produce any of them more extraordinary than the cures of the *Abbé Paris*'s ſupplicants, or that of Madame *de la Foſſe*. Yet we ſee that even *theſe* have been accounted for in a mere natural way; much more, therefore, thoſe cures, which had no ſuch ſudden operation, and with regard to which we have no grounds for excluding the efficacy of the uſually preſcribed remedies.—Indeed, a man of ſenſe cannot avoid wondering at the extravagant length to which ſome people can extend their faith, when he obſerves ſo many cures attributed, by the ſuperſtitious amongſt the *Roman Catholics*, to the miraculous interpoſition of a ſaint prayed to, though the cures be ſlow and gradual, and though uſual probable remedies are, at the

ſame time, tried. Bred up, from their infancy in a perſuaſion that miraculous powers are continued in their church, and exerciſed by the interceſſion of their ſaints; to the prayers and maſſes offered to them they attribute *all*, and to the ſkill of the phyſician, and his medicines adminiſtered, *nothing*. Hence may we ſee their ſhrines and altars loaded with offerings of perſons profeſſing themſelves indebted for their cures to *St. Francis*, or *St. Anthony*, when they ought rather to have acknowledged their obligations to *Hippocrates* or *Boerhaave*.

Reaſon points out to us this general rule.—Never to attribute any event to a miraculous interpoſition, when we can trace the operation of natural, adequate cauſes. But the writers of the breviary, the biographers of the *Romiſh* ſaints, and but too many others of that communion, ſeem to reverſe the rule, and to think, that the bare poſſibility of there being a miraculous interpoſition, in any particular caſe,

is ſufficient to warrant their believing that there really was. And this is obvious, not only from the cures which they aſcribe to their ſaints, but alſo from other events which they look upon as miraculous. Thus ſome celebrated reliques, or ſome favourite image expoſed to public view, and public devotion, are looked upon to have brought about a change of weather, which would have happened however, and which, perhaps, the barometer had foretold.

But, though in many of the cures aſcribed by the ſuperſtitious *Roman Catholics* to a miraculous interceſſion, we can trace the operation of the uſual natural cauſes, I muſt not conceal that they lay claim to a *ſtanding* power of performing one particular cure, where the ſpiritual means made uſe of, are ſo cloſely connected with the ſuppoſed change wrought upon the patients, as to exclude every other cauſe from acting.—You may eaſily gueſs that I have in my eye the cures of perſons ſaid to be poſſeſſed by the *devil*, by ſprinkling them

with holy water, by the application of reliques, by prayers, by making ſigns of the croſs, and uſing other ceremonies comprized under the general term of *exorciſing*.

That ſuch feats are exhibited to public view, and frequently tranſacted in the churches of *Roman* Catholics, is well known. But certainly they are the moſt improper inſtances that could poſſibly be pitched upon, as proofs of the reality of a miraculous power ſubſiſting in their church. For, if what has been offered, under the preſent head, ſatisfy us, how little reaſon the *Papiſts* have for believing that there is any thing ſupernatural in the cures they boaſt of, even when there are no grounds for doubting of the reality of the diſeaſe, much leſs reaſon is there for believing that there is any thing ſupernatural performed, when the reality of the diſeaſe (of the only diſeaſe a *ſtanding* power of curing which is claimed) is apparently ſuſpicious.—Now, this is remarkably the caſe of the *dæmoniacs* of the church of

Rome. A few grimaces, wild geſtures, diſordered agitations, and blaſphemous exclamations, ſuited to the character of the ſuppoſed infernal inhabitants, conſtitute all we know of their diſeaſe. And, conſequently, as all theſe ſymptoms are ambiguous, and may be aſſumed at pleaſure by an impoſtor, a colluſion between the *exorciſt*, and the perſon *exorciſed* will account for the whole tranſaction; and every one, who would avoid the character of being ſuperſtitiouſly credulous, will naturally account for it in this manner, rather than by ſuppoſing that any ſupernatural cauſe intervened.

Nay, indeed, the appearances of impoſture and colluſion, with regard to *the caſting out of devils* amongſt *Papiſts*, are ſo glaring, that there are few of themſelves who care much to boaſt of the exploits of their *exorciſts*, and therefore, there ſeems leſs need to enter upon any detection of them, here. However, for your amuſement, you may peruſe, in the note, a ſtory

which, while it will expoſe to you the frauds practiſed with regard to *reliques*, will lead you alſo naturally to conclude, that when the perſons out of whom devils are ſuppoſed, by Papiſts, to be caſt, are treated as they were in the ſtory I ſhall quote, there will always be a like ſcene of groſs impoſture brought to light *.

* In the year 1564, Prince Chriſtopher of *Radzivil* having taken a journey to *Rome*, out of devotion, the Pope, at his departure, made him a preſent of a box of *reliques*: which on his return to *Poland*, ſoon became famous in all that country. Some months had hardly paſſed, when ſome monks came to beg the uſe of his reliques, in order to relieve a man poſſeſſed by the devil. The Prince having complied with their requeſt, the box was, with great ſolemnity, carried to church, and being applied to the body of him that was poſſeſſed, the devil preſently went out, with the grimaces and geſtures uſual on ſuch occaſions: *A miracle!* was the inſtant cry of all the ſpectators, and the Prince himſelf bleſſed God, with hands and eyes lifted up to Heaven, for favouring him with ſo powerful a treaſure. Not long after, the Prince being talking of what he had ſeen, and boaſting of the virtue of his reliques, one of his gentlemen ſmiled, and, after many promiſes of forgiveneſs, ingenuouſly told him, that in their return from Rome, he had unhappily loſt the box of reliques, but for fear of his anger, had cauſed another to be made as like as poſſible to the true one, which he had filled with all the little bones and other

trinkets that he could meet with : and that this was the box which the monks made him believe had performed the miracle. The Prince ſent next morning for the monks, and enquired if they knew of any *dæmoniac* who had need of his reliques. One was ſoon found to act his part in this farce, and the Prince cauſed him to be exorciſed in his preſence. But when all they could do would not prevail upon the devil to diſlodge himſelf, the Prince ordered the monks to withdraw, and delivered over the *poſſeſſed* man to another kind of exorciſts, ſome *Tartars* belonging to his ſtables to be well laſhed till he ſhould confeſs the cheat. The dæmoniac at firſt, thought to have carried it off by horrible geſtures and grimaces, but the *Tartars* laying on their blows in good earneſt, quickly moved the devil to confeſs the truth, and beg pardon of the Prince.—Next morning the monks, who ſuſpected nothing of what had paſſed, being ſent for again, in their preſence the man threw himſelf at the Prince's feet, and confeſſed that he was not poſſeſſed with the devil, nor ever had been in his life. The monks would have perſuaded the Prince that this was an artifice of the devil, who ſpoke through the mouth of that man, but when he called for his *Tartars* to exorciſe another devil the *father of lies*, out of them alſo, they began to change their language and confeſſed the *cheat*.—The detection of this impoſture had ſuch an effect on the prince, that he, ſoon after, made open profeſſion of the reformed religion.—See this ſtory in Archbiſhop *Wake*'s Defence of the Expoſition of the Doctrine of the Church of England, Part 2d. p. 196—7, or

Dr. *Mead* *, the prejudice which Chriſtianity receives from the perpetration of ſuch pious frauds, or rather, as one may expreſs it, diabolical inventions. For though this trick of diſpoſſeſſing the devil, may perhaps impoſe upon a few; yet the wiſer ſort who ſee through the impoſture, are but too often induced to believe, that a religion ſupported by ſuch frauds, hath no better ſupport; and are led to reject Chriſtianity on account of the ſhameleſs arts to which they ſee its profeſſors have recourſe.

Drelincourt's Reponſe a M. le Landgrave Erneſt, p. 348, § 60.

* Quis non merito irridet ſolennes iſtos Romæ pontificum ritus, quibus exorcizantur, ut loqui amant, dæmoniaci, dum homines geſtus quoſdam & furores, quales a malis geniis provenire putantur, ſimulare docti, aquâ luſtrali & precibus quibuſdam, quaſi incantamentis, ſui compotes fieri, & a cacodæmonibus liberari ſe fingant? Verum iſtæ præſtigiæ, quantumvis oculis & mentibus ignaræ plebis illudant; paullo tamen fagaciores non modo offendunt, ſed & revera ipſis nocent. Hi enim, dolo perſpecto, ad impietatem proni ducuntur.—Medica Sacra præf.

But, to return; beſides this power of diſpoſſeſſing of devils (which is the only *ſtanding* miraculous cure of the church of Rome) *ſtanding* miracles of another kind, are boaſted of by Papiſts.—Miracles which, upon examination, will dwindle into mere *legerdemain tricks*, or at leaſt, into effects of a ſuperior acquaintance with the powers and properties of *material* compoſitions. —The liquefaction of the congealed blood of St. *Januarius* performed annually at *Naples*, on the feſtival of that ſaint, as it is the moſt celebrated of all ſuch miracles ſaid to ſubſiſt in the church, deſerves to be taken notice of by me.

Now that a ſubſtance, viſibly dry and ſolid, having the appearance of coagulated blood, incloſed in a glaſs hermetically ſealed, actually does melt, while held by the prieſt in his hands, and brought near to the ſaint's head, which is placed on the altar, is a fact which thouſands of ſpectators are eye-witneſſes of, every year. But however extraordinary this may ſeem, to

ſuppoſe, as the *Neapolitans* do, that there is any miracle in the caſe, would be to make the experiments of the *natural philoſopher*, and the tranſmutations of the *chymiſt* deſerve this name; as ſome of them are far more ſurprizing than the liquefaction of this ſaint's pretended blood. The particular natural cauſe is not, indeed, abſolutely agreed upon. Some have imagined that the heat of the hands of the prieſts, who keep tampering with the phial of blood, during the celebration of maſs, will be ſufficient to make it melt *. Others

* Dr. *Middleton* in his Letter from Rome, quotes *Mabillon* much to this purpoſe.—"But by whatever way (continues the Doctor) it be effected, it is plainly nothing elſe, "but the copy of an old cheat of the ſame kind, tranſacted "near the ſame place, which *Horace* makes himſelf merry, "with, in his Journey to *Brunduſium*; telling us, how the "prieſts would have impoſed upon him and his friends, at a "town called *Gnatia*, by perſuading them that the frankin-"cenſe in the temple uſed to diſſolve and melt miraculouſly "of itſelf, without the help of fire."—Letter from Rome, p. 209.

The paſſage of Horace alluded to, is as follows.

——— Dehinc Gnatia lymphis
Iratis exſtructa dedit riſuſque, jocoſque

again, have been inclined to believe that the liquefaction is effected by the heat of vaſt numbers of wax tapers of a moſt enormous ſize, with which the altar is decked out, and many of which are placed ſo conveniently, that the prieſt can, without any appearance of deſign, hold the glaſs ſo near to them as to make it hot, and conſequently diſpoſe the incloſed ſubſtance to melt. I ſhould be inclined to ſubſcribe to this opinion, had I not met with a more probable ſolution. I am informed (for I never tried the experiment myſelf) that a compoſition of *crocus martis* and *cochineal* will perfectly reſemble congealed blood; and by dropping the ſmalleſt quantity of *aqua-fortis* amongſt this compoſition, its dry particles will be put into a ferment, till, at laſt, an ebullition is excited, and the ſubſtance becomes liquid. That a glaſs may be ſo contrived as to keep the *aqua-*

Dum flamma ſine, thura liquefcere limine ſacro
Perſuadere cupit: credat Judæus appella
Non ego.———

SAT. v. L. I.

fortis ſeparate from the dry ſubſtance, till the critical moment when the liquefaction is to be effected, may be eaſily conceived. And, in fact, the phial, which contains the pretended blood, is ſo conſtituted. It is ſomething like an hour-glaſs, and the dry ſubſtance is lodged in the upper diviſion. Now in the lower diviſion of the glaſs a few drops of *aqua-fortis* may be lodged, without furniſhing any ſuſpicion, as the colour will prevent its being diſtinguiſhed. All the attendant circumſtances of this *bungling trick* *, are perfectly well accounted for, by admitting this ſolution. Whenever the prieſt would have the miracle take effect, he need only invert the glaſs, and then the *aqua-fortis* being uppermoſt, will drop down upon the dry ſubſtance, and excite an ebullition which reſembles melting. And upon reſtoring the glaſs to its former poſition, the ſpectator will ſee the ſubſtance, the particles of which have

* Mr. Addiſon's expreſſion, in his Travels, and as he ſaw the miracle performed, when he was at Naples, his judgment of it, is much to the purpoſe.

been ſeparated by the *aquâ-fortis*, drop down to the bottom of the glaſs, in the ſame manner that the ſand runs through. —The *Neapolitans* (as fit ſubjects to be impoſed upon as the moſt ſervile bigotry and ſuperſtitious credulity can make them) eſteem this annual miracle as a mark of the protection of Heaven, and whenever the blood fails to melt, a general panic enſues. Now, upon a ſuppoſition that I have aſſigned the real cauſe, the prieſts can prevent the ſucceſs of the miracle whenever they pleaſe; and accordingly we know that they actually do ſo, when they have any proſpect of advancing their own intereſt, by infuſing a notion into the minds of the *Neapolitans*, that Heaven is angry with their nation *.

But why do I ſend you to the extremities of *Italy*, to ſee this notable miracle performed by *Papiſts?* An itinerant chy-

* Some few years ago the court of Naples having quarrelled with the Pope, his Holineſs prevailed upon Januarius not to let his blood melt that year.

miſt, ſome years ago, entertained the Proteſtant inhabitants of *Great Britain*, with the ſame feat, for the ſmall price of a ſhilling; and I am told that it is a *ſtanding* exploit in the experiment-room of Mr. *King*, who I believe, does not pretend to be a conjurer, or worker of miracles, on the ſtrength of it.

To mention any more *ſtanding miracles** would be unneceſſary, as none I ever heard of, can vie, in reputation, with the melting of *Januarius*'s blood, which, as we have ſhewn, may be a trick worthy of a juggler, rather than a miracle performed by Heaven.

* Not only the church of Rome, but the Eaſtern churches alſo, have their ſtanding, annual miracles. An inſtance of which we have in Maundrell's account of his Journey from Aleppo to Jeruſalem; where the reader will find a particular deſcription of the manner in which the Patriarch of the Armenians, brings fire out of the Holy Sepulchre. This annually repeated operation carries ſo viſibly the air of an impoſture, in the judgment of the ignorant Turks, that it does infinite diſſervice to the cauſe of Chriſtianity amongſt them.

The pretended miracles of Paganism and Popery, have, I hope, been sufficiently exposed by placing them in their true light, as being either the interested contrivances of imposture, or the fanciful misconceptions of credulity. But little has been done to establish the credibility of the Gospel miracles, if I rest here; if I do not convince you, by an accurate view of the evidences supporting them, that they can be easily distinguished from those spurious events of the marvellous kind, which infidelity has set up in opposition to them.

This task I now enter upon, and I shall begin it by shewing that the objections which effectually disprove the miraculous nature of those boasted cures of diseases, just examined by me, will not hold good when applied to the cures performed by *Jesus*, and recorded in the Gospels.

What then was the natural cause which I assigned as adequate to bring about the

cures attributed to the interceſſion of the *Abbé Paris?*—This appeared to be, ſtrong impreſſions made on the minds of fanciful, enthuſiaſtic perſons, by the confidence they had in praying to their ſaint. Now it is evident, that this cannot be affirmed of many of the objects relieved by *Jeſus.*

When *He* firſt appeared as a worker of miracles, he ſtood ſingly, backed by no ſect, eſpouſed by no party. He was not revered, from the beginning by any number of followers, wrapped up with high notions of his ſanctity, or opinion of his power; but gained his followers in conſequence of the works which he performed, to make himſelf known. Nay, far from having any party *for* him, every body had the ſtrongeſt prejudices againſt him. That he was a *Galilean,* and that he was a *carpenter's ſon,* had this effect amongſt the *Jews.*—The ſupplicants at the tomb of the *Abbé Paris* were, previouſly to their application to him, his followers and admirers, and conſequently, had the ſtrong-

eſt confidence in the efficacy of their application. But how could the obſcure, the deſpiſed *Jeſus*, find the *firſt* perſons who were cured by him, with their minds thus affected, with a confidence thus fixed on him?—True, indeed, when once his fame had gone about through *Judea*, and his reputation had been ſpread by thoſe whom he had healed, then may we ſuppoſe that ſome of thoſe who were brought before him to be cured, had a confidence and expectation of relief. Yet, even in this period of his miniſtry, many cures were performed under ſuch circumſtances, that the relief received could not be owing to the abovementioned cauſe. In the cure of the *Roman centurion*'s ſervant related both by *St. Matthew* * and *St. Luke* †, we may obſerve, that the ſick perſon was lying at home, and that the application for relief was not made to *Jeſus*, by the ſervant himſelf, but by his maſter.

* Matth. Ch. viii. Ver. 5, &c.

† Luke, the beginning of the 7th Chapter.

A ſimilar inſtance we have in the caſe of the nobleman's ſon of *Capernaum* related by *St. John* *.

Again; we have ſeveral inſtances in the Goſpels, of cures performed on perſons who, though preſent, made no application to *Jeſus* for relief, as not knowing at all, or elſe not believing that he had power to heal them. Of this ſort are the cures of the infirm man lying at the Pool †; of the man born blind ‡; of the dropſical perſon §, and of him who had the withered hand ¶. In all which caſes, there could be no impreſſions made on the minds of the patients, that could contribute any thing to the relief received.

But, ſecondly; though we were to

* John, 4th Ch. 46th Ver.

† John, 5th Ch. from the beginning.

‡ John, 9th all the Chapter.

§ Luke, 14th Chap. 2d, 3d, and 4th Verſes.

¶ Mark, 3d Chap. 5 firſt Verſes.

grant that every one cured by *Jeſus* had a confidence in the efficacy of their application to him, there is one very remarkable circumſtance which clearly demonſtrates that the benefit they received could not be owing to this cauſe. And this is—The ſucceſs of the application to *Jeſus* was equal on all the patients, and every one who applied to him, was cured. This fact appears indubitably from the Goſpels *, and furniſhes us with the ſtrongeſt

* It may not be improper to confirm this, by collecting the following texts—Healing all manner of ſickneſs, and all manner of diſeaſe among the people. And his fame went through Syria, and they brought unto him *all* ſick people, that were taken with divers diſeaſes and torments, and thoſe which were poſſeſſed with devils, and thoſe which were lunatic, and thoſe that had the palſy, and he healed them, Matth. iv. 23, 24.—And he caſt out the ſpirits with his word, and healed *all* that were ſick, Matth. viii. 16.—And Jeſus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their Synagogues and preaching the Goſpel of the kingdom, and healing *every* ſickneſs and every diſeaſe among the people, Matth. ix. 35. Great multitudes followed him and he healed them *all*, Matth. xii. 15. And Jeſus went forth and ſaw a great multitude, and was moved with compaſſion towards them, and healed their ſick, Matth. xiv. 12. And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they ſent

argument that theſe cures could not be occaſioned by the force of any impreſſions

out into all the country round about, and brought unto him *all* that were diſeaſed, and beſought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment, and *as many* as touched him were made perfectly whole, Mark vi. 5, 6.—Now when the ſun was ſetting, all they that had any ſick with divers diſeaſes, brought them unto him, and he laid his hands on *every one* of them and healed them, Luke, iv. 40.—And the whole multitude ſought to touch him, for there went virtue out of him, and healed them *all*, Luke vii. 19.—From theſe and many other texts which, for brevity, I omit, I think it plain, that *every* one who applied to Jeſus was healed. Indeed there is one or two texts which, at firſt ſight, may be thought to contradict this. We read, Mark vi. 5. That Jeſus could do no mighty works there (in his own country) ſave that he laid his hands upon a few ſick and healed them. But what St. Mark tells us Jeſus *could* not do, St. Matthew relates ſimply, as what he *did* not do: and he *did* not many mighty works there, becauſe of their unbelief; Matth. xiii. 58. So that from comparing theſe two texts, it appears that if Jeſus did not perform many mighty works in his own country, this was not becauſe there was any failure of power in him; but becauſe of their unbelief; which deprived him of opportunities of diſplaying his miraculous power, (as few would, in this caſe, bring their ſick to be healed by him) and which rendered it unfit that he ſhould perform many mighty works among them; as their prejudices againſt him, on account of his low eſtate, would, he knew, make his miracles of no effect. He, therefore, abſtained from per-

made on their minds. For, whence does it happen that the ſkill of medicine has never been able to find out any remedy that will have exactly the ſame effect on every one that uſes it? From this cauſe, evidently, that men's conſtitutions differ as much as do their faces. And, therefore, it always will happen, that when vaſt numbers of people try the ſame remedy, ſome of them will receive greater benefit than others, and many of them, it is likely, will receive no benefit at all.—Now *Jeſus*'s miniſtry laſted between three and four years, during all which ſpace of time, *he went about doing good, healing every infirmity of the people:* ſo that the number of thoſe who applied to him for their

forming them amongſt his countrymen, benevolent even in this, as their guilt would have been aggravated, if, in ſpite of miracles, they had continued to reject the Goſpel.—And if, in other places of the Goſpels, we find Jeſus requiring faith, in the perſons who applied to him for relief, the reaſon of this, was not that their faith was a cauſe, which contributed to their cure, in a natural way, but only, that it rendered them fit objects of having ſo great a bleſſing conferred on them.

cures, muſt have been very great, admitting, therefore, that every one of them had a confidence in the efficacy of their application, yet, that this confidence ſhould produce the ſame effect, without any variation, on ſo many perſons, is a thing ſo incredible, that he muſt, indeed, be an eaſy believer, who can ſuppoſe it. Obſerve how it was with thoſe who applied to the *Abbé Paris*. Were they all cured? So far from this, that inconſiderable, vaſtly ſo, was the number of thoſe who received any benefit. The *invariableneſs*, therefore, of the ſucceſs of ſo many applications to *Jeſus*, makes a remarkable diſtinction between the cures aſcribed to him, and thoſe attributed to the *Abbé Paris*—a difference which points out a different cauſe. Had ten thouſand perſons prayed to the hoſt for their cures, at the ſame time, and *all* of them been immediately relieved; and if, for three or four years, every one who had made the ſame application, had met with the ſame ſucceſs, I ſhould have juſtly deſerved to be laughed at, had I aſcribed all

this to the cauſe which, it is highly probable, effected the ſingle cure of Madame *de la Foſſe*.

Since then it appears, that the cures aſcribed to *Jeſus* cannot be accounted for, by that particular cauſe, abovementioned, let us now ſee in what other way they can be accounted for, without allowing them to be miracles. And there is apparently, no other evaſion left but this—to ſay that the ſame cures would have happened, although *Jeſus* had never been applied to, and that his word or touch contributed as little to the effects produced, as the ſtriking of a clock contributes to any particular effect produced at the ſame inſtant, by the operation of its proper cauſe. But ſurely, they who can ſeriouſly urge this objection, do not ſufficiently attend to the following circumſtances.

Had the word or touch of *Jeſus* concurred only with a few cures, while in other caſes no effect followed from them, then,

indeed, there might have been room for arguing, that the cures attributed to him would have happened, though he had never ſpoken the word, or touched the patient. But it was not once or twice, or a few times, that *Jeſus*'s interpoſition, and the recovery of a ſick perſon, concurred; but, I may ſay in innumerable inſtances; the experiment was tried on vaſt multitudes, labouring under all poſſible variety of diſeaſes, and never tried in vain. Can it, therefore, be ſaid that all theſe cures might equally have happened, although the patients had never been brought to *Jeſus?* At this rate, be ſo kind as to aſcertain when and in what caſe, we can diſcover that any particular cauſe has operated.

What ſtrengthens my obſervation is this That not only did the application to *Jeſus*, and the cure *always* concur, as often as the experiment was tried; but, farther, they concurred *inſtantaneouſly*. No ſooner was the word ſpoken by him, but the cripple

walked, the deaf heard, the dumb ſpake, the blind ſaw. A concurrence ſo exact, ſo critical as this, excludes all other cauſes from having any ſhare in the operation. For to imagine it poſſible that this concurrence could be quite *accidental*, in ſuch a multiplicity of trials, and upon every trial, is as wild an opinion, as it would be to imagine that it could ever poſſibly happen, that for three or four years, all the ſick perſons in *London* ſhould recover at the inſtant when *St. Paul's* clock ſtruck one. —This then is the qualification I require, before we can be warranted to pronounce a cure to be miraculous, though inſtantaneouſly connected with means naturally inſufficient.—*The concurrence and connection muſt be obſerved to ſubſiſt, not only in many inſtances, but in every inſtance where the experiment was made.* And this qualification undoubtedly belongs to the cures aſcribed to *Jeſus;* but to none other of all thoſe boaſted works ſet up in oppoſition to them.

Add to this, that in bringing about the cures attributed to the *Abbé Paris*, and, in general, all the cures aſcribed, by credulous *Roman Catholics*, to the interpoſition of their ſaints, no living agent, viſibly, interpoſes. Their ſaints, ſo far as any body can diſcover, give no ſigns of ſuch interpoſitions, the cure does not follow any thing ſaid or done by them, and, conſequently, the ſpectators are left at full liberty, to call in whatever cauſe reaſon may dictate, or fancy ſuggeſt. But no ſuch objection can be made againſt the miraculous interpoſition of *Jeſus*. The cures attributed to him, he alſo claimed as his works. He ſpake the word, or touched the patient, or he prayed to Heaven, or he made clay and anointed the eyes, aſſerting at the ſame time, that theſe his words or actions were the cauſe of the cures.

But why need I be at ſo much pains to ſhew that no natural cauſe brought about the cures attributed to *Jeſus*, when we

know that ſome of them were ſuch as no natural cauſe could poſſibly bring about? —Indeed, in general, we reaſon much in the dark when we give our opinion as to a diſeaſe being *naturally* curable or not. The learned faculty, who certainly are the beſt judges, can give but little ſatisfaction, on this point. For experience muſt furniſh us with inſtances of ſick perſons, abandoned as incurable, by one phyſician, cured through the ſuperior ſkill, or, perhaps, better luck of another; and with inſtances of others who, pronounced incurable by every phyſician, have, by trying ſome remedy, the preſcription of whim or ſuggeſtion of fancy, been completely cured. At beſt, even the phyſician, can, in moſt caſes, only give his conjecture; for till phyſic proceed upon ſurer principles than it does in its preſent ſtate, the ſkill of the beſt phyſician, is in general, but conjecture. However, I think, amidſt all this ambiguity and darkneſs—a diſeaſe may, with certainty, be pronounced incurable in a natural way, when the

cure cannot be effected without exerting a power of creation.—Now, though phyſicians who have treated of the diſeaſes cured by *Jeſus* have, certainly, gone too far in repreſenting them *all* *, as naturally

* Thomas Bartholin de *Morbis Biblicis*, apud Crenii Faſciculum, tom. 5. Roterodam, 1695.—Gulielmus Ader *Enarratio de Ægrot, & Morbis in Evangel.* apud Tractat. Biblic. in Critic. Sacr. p. 3360, 3367. tom. 9. Lond.—Bartholin alſo quotes one Mercurialis, who had written to the ſame purpoſe. Dr. Mead, in his *Medica Sacra*, does not carry the matter ſo far. For though he expreſſes himſelf of opinion—that the woman cured by Jeſus, of an iſſue of blood, of *twelve years* continuance ; and the other who was cured of an infirm habit of body, with which ſhe had been bent, for *two and twenty years*, could have received no relief in a natural way,—yet he is far from aſſerting any ſuch thing with regard to the cures of the palſy, epilepſy, and madneſs, which two laſt diſeaſes, he is of opinion, were the complaints of the perſons called *dæmoniacs*. And here I am naturally led to ſay ſomewhat on this particular miracle ſo often aſcribed to Jeſus in the Goſpels, the accounts of which the enemies of Chriſtianity have treated with ſo much ridicule, and which many of the moſt learned amongſt Chriſtians have thought liable to great difficulties. Certain it is that the cures of dæmoniacs recorded in the New Teſtament, have been the ſource of an infinity of ſcenes of impoſture, and been imitated with ſuch glaring marks of fraud, as have given our adverſaries a pretence to dart their opprobrious

incurable; there are ſome of them which were undoubtedly, beyond the power of

taunts at a religion which needs not the aſſiſtance of fraud: though fraud, alas! has been but too often applied to by ſome of its unworthy profeſſors.

However, let us ſuppoſe, according to the prevailing opinion amongſt Chriſtians, that the dæmoniacs of the New Teſtament laboured under diſeaſes *ſupernaturally* inflicted, and that their frantic ſymptoms were owing to their being poſſeſſed by dæmons, yet I cannot ſee why this ſhould be treated with ſo much ridicule. The exiſtence of dæmons, ſuperior, inviſible beings, will hardly be denied; and admitting their exiſtence, who will be ſo bold as to aſſert that it is abſurd or unreaſonable to ſuppoſe that God ſhould permit theſe beings (who can never interfere in the government of the world but by God's permiſſion on ſome extraordinary occaſions) at that extraordinary period, when Chriſtianity was to be confirmed by all the variety of miracles, to become the inſtruments of inflicting diſeaſes, that the power of Jeſus and his Apoſtles, over the inhabitants of the inviſible world, might be the better demonſtrated? This permiſſion of the Deity cannot be charged with any abſurdity, but by the ſcorner, who can, with equal eaſe, dreſs up the moſt evident deductions of reaſon, in a garb of ridicule.—Nor can the ſuſpicions of fraud and colluſion ſo viſible, as I obſerved above, in the exorciſing of dæmoniacs, amongſt the Papiſts, be applicable to the inſtances of ſuch cures recorded in the New Teſtament, becauſe Jeſus did not reſt his claim to be a worker of miracles on them alone, (which is the caſe in the inſtances where we ſuſpect fraud) but performed

human means, to cure, becauſe they conſiſted in reſtoring maimed members, which

alſo a vaſt variety of other cures, and, beſides cures, many works which were in their own natures miraculous, and which remove all grounds of ſuſpicion as to there being any fraud or colluſion in the performance of *this*.

But while I think myſelf ſufficiently warranted to defend the commonly received notion about the dæmoniacs of the New Teſtament from the ridicule of the infidel, I muſt, at the ſame time, obſerve that the very learned and able author *of the Enquiry into the Meaning of the Dæmoniacs*, has taken another way of putting a ſtop to the objections of cavillers on this head, by his attempt to prove that the dæmoniacs cured by Jeſus did not labour under any diſeaſe ſupernaturally inflicted. And indeed this ſeems to be certain, that all the ſymptoms aſcribed to them by the Evangeliſts are ſuch as belong to diſeaſes whoſe natural cauſes we can aſſign. *Inſanorum hæc ſunt omnia* (all the particular ſymptons of the dæmoniacs, are to be met with in perſons who are frantic) ſays Dr. Mead in his *Medica Sacra*, p. 66. And if one of his ſkill in medicine gives this judgment, few will care to diſpute it.

But the greateſt difficulty in this ſcheme is ſtill behind. For admitting that all the ſymptoms aſcribed to the Scripture dæmoniacs are to be found in mad people, yet does not the Scripture poſitively ſay, that this madneſs was ſupernaturally inflicted? And how can the many texts in which mention is made of Jeſus's rebuking the unclean ſpirits, of his converſing with them, of his caſting them out, be reconciled with the opinion which makes the diſeaſe of theſe pa-

could not be done without exerting a creative power. I need not inform you,

tients a mere natural madneſs?—For an anſwer to theſe ſeemingly inſuperable difficulties, I refer the learned reader to the *Enquiry into the Meaning of the Dæmoniacs*, and *the farther Enquiry*, by the ſame eminent hand, who has done more than at firſt ſight one could imagine poſſible, to remove theſe difficulties, by giving ſuch interpretations of the texts which ſtand moſt in the way of his ſcheme, as, when compared with certain opinions and prejudices, entertained by the Jews in our Saviour's time, will in his opinion, reconcile them to his hypotheſis, that the dæmoniacs of the New Teſtament laboured under diſeaſes merely natural.—He has obſerved, what muſt be allowed to be true, that the Jews attributed to the influence of evil ſpirits, all diſeaſes whoſe ſymptoms were extraordinary, and in particular thoſe by which the body was diſtorted, and the mind diſturbed with melancholy or frenzy. Dr. *Lightfoot*'s words are "Judæis uſitatiſſimum erat morbos quoſdam graviores, "eos præſertim quibus vel diſtortum eſt corpus vel mens "turbata & agitata phreneſi, malis ſpiritibus attribuere." Hor. Heb. ad. Matth. xvii. 15. And *Maimonides* is quoted by the ſame writer, Hor Heb. ad Luk. xiii. 11, as telling us that the Jews called every ſort of melancholy an evil ſpirit—and as explaining evil ſpirit to mean only diſeaſe.—That the idea of being poſſeſſed with a dæmon was always annexed to that of madneſs by the Jews, the author of the Enquiry ſhews alſo from ſeveral paſſages in the New Teſtament, ſee John vii. 20. Matth. xi. 18. John viii. 48—52, and John x. 20. In the laſt text we read. *Many ſaid he*

who are acquainted with the force of the original word, that this was the caſe, with

hath a devil and is mad. Here madneſs is imputed to our Saviour, and the imagined cauſe is—he hath a devil.

This then being the caſe; every madman being thought, by thoſe *with* whom Jeſus converſed, and *to* whom the Evangeliſts wrote, to be poſſeſſed with a dæmon, Jeſus in curing ſuch patients, and the Evangeliſts in relating their cures, according to the plan of the author of the Enquiry, makes uſe of the terms which cuſtom had made technical. When once words are applied by univerſal cuſtom to ſuch and ſuch diſorders, however ill grounded, ſilly, or ſuperſtitious the words be, originally, they muſt be made uſe of by every one who ſpeaks of theſe diſorders, in order to his being underſtood. Nor can it be thought that Jeſus, by accommodating his language to the prevailing opinion about the cauſe of madneſs, gave any countenance to this ſuperſtitious hypotheſis. At this rate a philoſopher who talks of the ſun's riſing or ſetting, may be ſaid to countenance the exploded ſyſtem of Ptolemy.—"Jeſus made uſe of words "which cuſtom had ſanctified; and his buſineſs was to cure "the diſeaſes before him. He has ſaid nothing to affirm "or deny the power of dæmons, nor was it to his purpoſe; "but he uſed the language that others did, and ſpoke of "diſtempers as now a phyſician would, that ſhould uſe the "common terms of art, without affirming or denying the "cauſe of the diſeaſe by ſuch language." Farther Enquiry, p. 106. Such, in general, are the principles of this author, and if it ſhould be thought that he has failed in proving his point, and that ſome of his interpretations are too harſh to

regard to the κυλλοι, the maimed, who as we learn from *St. Matthew*, ch. xv. ver. 30. were amongſt the perſons who received their cures from *Jeſus*: and one would indeed be a caviller, who could aſſert that a blindneſs from the mother's womb (and ſuch blindneſs was cured by *Jeſus*) which muſt have ariſen from ſome original defect in the organs of viſion, did not alſo require a power of creation, in order to be removed.

After all: though none of the cures performed by *Jeſus* had required the exertion of a creative power to effect them, we ſhould, nevertheleſs, have had infallible aſ-

be admitted, this, at leaſt, muſt be allowed to him, "that "the cauſe of Chriſt is not affected by the ſolution he main-"tains. For in both caſes a real miracle is done; the per-"ſon affected is cured; and the evidence ariſing from mi-"racle, for the truth of Chriſtianity, is equally ſtrong. The "miracle is the ſame, if the perſon be cured, whatever is "the cauſe of his diſtemper, whether it proceeds from un-"clean ſpirits, and their operations upon human bodies; "or from any defect, or from any preternatural and extra-"ordinary motions in them." Preface to the Enquiry.

ſurance, that they were performed miraculouſly, and by a perſon veſted with a ſupernatural power. For though *Jeſus* went about *healing every infirmity of the people*, he did not reſt his claim to be a worker of miracles on his power of healing, *alone*. His hiſtory furniſhes us with a variety of works performed by him, the performance of which was indiſputably beyond the reach of any *natural cauſes*.

Some, indeed, who, of late years, have written againſt the force of the argument drawn from miracles, in order to evade this, have urged, that we have no certain rule by which to judge whether an event be miraculous or no; becauſe we cannot be certain how far the powers of natural cauſes may poſſibly reach.—But, in anſwer to this, it has been moſt juſtly remarked, that though, in *ſome* caſes, we have no certainty how far the powers of natural cauſes *may* extend; yet are we able to pronounce, with the greateſt certainty, in *other* caſes, how far they *cannot* extend.

Particularly, whenever an effect happens which is, evidently and ſenſibly, contradictory to laws known to be fixed and eſtabliſhed in nature, we may pronounce with certainty, that ſuch an effect cannot be accounted for, but by admitting the interpoſition of a cauſe over-ruling and ſuſpending the eſtabliſhed courſe of things. And if we examine the works of *Jeſus* recorded in the *Goſpels*, we ſhall find many of them to be of this kind.

For, can any power of natural cauſes convert water into wine? Can it be poſſible, in a natural way, to feed thouſands, with a few ſmall loaves and fiſhes, and ſo as that the fragments left ſhould greatly exceed the original quantity of the food? Could it be owing to any natural cauſe that *Jeſus* walked on the ſea, and cauſed the tempeſt to ceaſe at his command?—In a word;—who can be ſo perverſe as to affirm, that the dead could be raiſed from their graves, and the ſpiritual principle re-united to the lifeleſs corpſe, but

by the interpoſition of the ſame cauſe, which firſt breathed into the inanimate clay the breath of life? All theſe and many other ſuch facts, recorded of *Jeſus*, are in their own natures miraculous, and conſequently though I ſhould not have removed all your doubts with regard to the cures performed by him, we ſhould ſtill have the moſt ſatisfying proofs of his being a worker of miracles. But I ſee not why we ſhould not inſiſt upon all his cures as ſo many miracles; for though the circumſtances of them, which I have mentioned, would not have eſtabliſhed this to your conviction, as I hope they have, yet I ſhould look upon it as the height of abſurd ſcepticiſm to doubt whether *Jeſus* could cure the paralytic, or the blind, when we ſee him raiſing *Lazarus*, the widow's ſon, the ruler of the ſynagogue's daughter, and, laſtly, himſelf, from the dead; or to pretend, that the perſon who could exert a creative power in turning water into wine, and in multiplying a few loaves and fiſhes, ſo as to be food for thouſands of people,

is not to be believed, when he claims to himſelf the power of healing the ſick.

Having offered what muſt be looked upon as abundantly ſufficient to ſhew, that *all* the extraordinary works aſcribed to *Jeſus*, were ſuch as required the exertion of ſupernatural power, I come now, as I propoſed, to produce the proofs, that ſuch a ſupernatural power was moſt undoubtedly, exerted by him, as is related in the New Teſtament.

When I examined the miracles reported to have been performed amongſt the *Pagans*, and amongſt Chriſtians ſince the publication of the Goſpel, I laid down ſome general rules, by which we may try them, one and all, wherever they occur, and which will ſet forth the grounds upon which we ſuſpect the accounts of them to be falſe. And we found, that none of theſe boaſted wonders could be aſſigned, which were not liable to one or more of the following objections, each of which is

a ſufficient ground for rejecting the particular facts that are affected by it. What then were theſe objections? Firſt, that they were not publiſhed to the world till long after the time when ſaid to be performed. Secondly, that they were not publiſhed in the places where it is pretended they were wrought, but only propagated at a great diſtance from the ſuppoſed ſcene of action. Thirdly, that if the accounts of them were publiſhed at the time when, and at the places where they are reported to be performed, the circumſtances under which they were publiſhed, favoured their paſſing without examination, and ſcreened them from detection.

Theſe, then, being the grounds upon which we ſuſpect thoſe accounts of miracles to be falſe, I cannot take a more effectual way to convince you that the Goſpel miracles are true, than to ſhew that none of the above grounds of ſuſpicion can be applied to them, by proving,

firſt, that they were publiſhed at the time when; ſecondly, they were publiſhed at the places where ſaid to be performed; and thirdly, that the circumſtances under which they were publiſhed, are ſuch as ſatisfy us they underwent a careful examination, and muſt have been detected had they been impoſtures.

And though the eſtabliſhing of theſe points will prove that the teſtimony for the miracles believed by the Proteſtant Chriſtian is *ſtronger*, than *that* urged for the miracles he rejects, and, conſequently, will warrant his making the diſtinction, he does, between them;—in order to remove every ground of cavilling, I ſhall not reſt the merits of my cauſe here, but proceed ſtill farther, by attempting to prove, firſt, that the teſtimony which ſupports the miracles recorded in the New Teſtament, is not only *ſtronger* than that which ſupports any pretended wonders, but alſo that it is the *ſtrongeſt* that can be ſuppoſed, or that, from the nature of the thing, could be

had; and ſecondly, that beſides the unexceptionable proof from teſtimony, the credibility of the Goſpel miracles is ſtrengthened by collateral evidences, peculiar to themſelves, and of the moſt ſtriking nature. I muſt beg your attention while I go through all theſe particulars, and ſhall begin with proving, that the objections which have been ſhewn to affect the teſtimony for the miracles which we reject, are not applicable to the teſtimony for the miracles which we believe.

Firſt, then, the miracles of *Jeſus*, were publiſhed and appealed to at the very time when ſaid to be performed. We have ſhewn that many of the moſt boaſted wonders of *Paganiſm* and *Popery* cannot be traced up to any cotemporary witneſſes, and were not heard of till length of time had thrown a veil over the impoſture. Now we have all the certainty that can be had for a matter of this kind, that the ſame objection does not lie againſt the miracles of the Goſpel.

It would be extremely impertinent in me to enter upon a proof that the books, in which we have an account of the miracles of *Jeſus*, are as old as the time they lay claim to. What was never diſputed by the enemies of Chriſtianity in its earlieſt ages, when opportunities and means of inquiry were to be had, would be denied with a very ill grace, and with very little probability of ſucceſs, after ſeventeen hundred years have elapſed. It is ſufficient to obſerve, at preſent, that every rule of criticiſm by which the genuineneſs of ancient books is eſtabliſhed, gives teſtimony to the genuineneſs of the books of the New Teſtament, to its being the work of thoſe authors whoſe name it bears. *Internal* marks of ſpurioufneſs, which have generally overturned the credit of ſuppoſititious writings, never have been, nor ever can be produced. *External*, corroborating teſtimonies, cannot be ſuppoſed ſtronger, than thoſe we can urge, to prove that our ſacred books are not the work of any later age. We can trace them up

from century to century, till we arrive at the very period when they are ſaid to have been written. We can trace them up, I ſay, mentioned by the writers of every age, and quoted by a chain of authors, beginning with cotemporary ones, whoſe works the ſevereſt critics cannot ſet aſide, without deſtroying all certainty, without giving up the genuineneſs of every ancient production *.

But, granting the books of the New Teſtament to be the genuine productions of thoſe, whoſe names they bear, ſtill you will object (as I remember you have objected to me) that it will not follow from this, that the miracles of *Jeſus* were publiſhed and avowed, till long after, the time aſſigned for them. The Goſpel of *St. John*, you obſerved, is not thought to have been written, at leaſt, not to have been

* The reader who would ſee the collateral ſupport of the genuineneſs and antiquity of the New Teſtament, as confirmed by other writings, may be ſatisfied by looking into Lardner's Credibility of the Goſpel Hiſtory.

publiſhed, till 60 years after the death of *Jeſus*, about the year 97. *St. Luke* did not write his Goſpel, if the evidence of antiquity is to be taken, till after the year of Chriſt 61—that is, twenty-ſeven years after his death. *St. Mark*, indeed, wrote before theſe two Evangeliſts, but two years poſterior to *St. Matthew*, the earlieſt of all the Goſpel hiſtorians; and *St. Matthew* never was affirmed by any one, to have written before the year 41—that is, eight after the death of *Jeſus*, though others, perhaps, with better authority, fix the date of his Goſpel many years lower. From theſe facts, admitted by Chriſtians, you inferred, that granting the Goſpels to be genuine, ſtill, the higheſt antiquity any of them can boaſt of, comes ſhort, *ſeveral years*, of the time when the miracles, there related, are ſaid to have been performed; and, conſequently, that the teſtimony for the miracles of *Jeſus* cannot be ſaid to have been publiſhed, till length of time had rendered an examination of their pretenſions, difficult to be ſet about.

I have, fairly, repreſented the ſtrength of your objection and what follows is, in my opinion, a ſufficient anſwer.

Writers in defence of Chriſtianity, have, indeed, contented themſelves, in general, with tracing up the teſtimony of the Goſpel miracles to the time when the hiſtories of them were written: and they thought this ſufficient, becauſe, though that time be poſterior, by many years, to any of the facts, yet it was not ſo long after, but that many who had it in their power to detect the fraud, if there was any, muſt have been ſtill alive. But, ſir, it is not merely from the Goſpels that we Chriſtians infer that *Jeſus*'s miracles were publicly avowed in his own time.—No;—though the Goſpels had never been written, we ſhould ſtill have had ſufficient grounds for affirming this. However paradoxical this aſſertion may ſeem, it can be well ſupported. For grant us only this conceſſion (if what was never diſputed can be called a conceſſion) that *Jeſus* lived and died at the time Chriſ-

tians ſay he did; and this, of itſelf, will prove that his pretenſion to miracles was coæval with him.

That a new religion was taught by *Jeſus*, is confirmed by the concurrent teſtimony of all antiquity, of *Jewiſh* and *Pagan*, as well as of *Chriſtian* writers; and is alſo evident from the change which *we know* was introduced into the ſtate of religion; which change *all* hiſtory fixes to that very period which Chriſtians aſſign for it. And that *Jeſus*'s claim to miracles was coæval with the firſt publication of Chriſtianity is obvious; becauſe the whole ſuperſtructure of Goſpel doctrines and precepts is built on this foundation. For unleſs *Jeſus* had wrought miracles, at the very time he taught, he muſt have defeated his own preaching. Upon no other grounds but the authority of God being with him, manifeſted by miracles, could he hope for ſucceſs amongſt the believers of a former revelation ſanctioned by the miracles of Moſes, and the Prophets his

ſucceſſors. Beſides, that *Jeſus* laid claim to miracles may be inferred from the character which we are as certain he aſſumed, as we are certain he exiſted.—I mean that of his being the *Meſſiah* expected by the *Jews*. For as the *Meſſiah* was marked in their prophecies, as one who ſhould perform miracles, the claim of *Jeſus* to be this illuſtrious perſon neceſſarily ſuppoſes a claim to thoſe extraordinary works which the *Meſſiah* was expected to perform.—Add to this—That the great fundamental doctrine of Chriſtianity—the redemption of mankind *by Chriſt's dying for our ſins, and riſing again for our juſtification*, ſuppoſes a miracle the moſt ſtriking that can be imagined. The reſurrection of *Jeſus* from the dead muſt have been publicly aſſerted wherever Chriſtianity was preached, for it is the very corner-ſtone of the religion. *If Chriſt be not riſen from the dead, both the preaching of the Apoſtle, and the faith of the convert would have been vain.*

Though, therefore, the written accounts of the miracles of *Jeſus*, that is, the Goſpels, were not publiſhed till many years after his death, yet, as we know, for certain, that Chriſtianity was preached during the whole intervening time; and, as we are equally certain, that it could not be preached without laying claim to miracles; for theſe reaſons, I think myſelf warranted to conclude, that the miracles aſcribed to the founder of Chriſtianity, do not labour under the firſt defect of teſtimony, which has been ſhewn to affect many of the pretended miracles ſet up in oppoſition to them, but were coæval with the preaching of Chriſtianity, and openly avowed at the very time when they are ſaid to have been wrought.

But, ſecondly, not only were the miracles aſcribed to *Jeſus*, publicly atteſted before length of time rendered an examination of the pretenſion, difficult; they were, alſo, atteſted at the very places

where the ſcene of them was laid. Unlike, in this, to many of the lying wonders, the reporters of which have wiſely guarded againſt a detection of the impoſture, by publiſhing them at ſuch a diſtance, from the pretended ſcene of action, that no examination could be made. It has been objected, indeed, that of the written accounts of *Jeſus*'s miracles, only one of them, *St. Matthew*'s, is affirmed to have been publiſhed on the ſpot: and that the other three Goſpels, were written at ſuch a diſtance * from *Judæa*, where the miracles were ſaid to have been performed, as put it out of every one's power, into whoſe hands they came, of examining into the truth of the facts contained in them.—Now, I grant that the matter of your objection cannot be denied; for three of the Goſpels were publiſhed at a vaſt diſtance

* The Goſpel of St. Mark is ſuppoſed to have been written at Rome; St. Luke's, according to ſome, at Rome alſo, though others will have it, in Greece: St. John's Goſpel all agree to have been written at Epheſus.

from the ſcene of *Jeſus*'s miracles. But though I were to allow that this was alſo the caſe of the fourth Goſpel, your cauſe would not, in the leaſt, be benefited; becauſe we could ſtill prove unexceptionably, that *Jeſus*'s miracles were *firſt* publiſhed and avowed at the very places where the ſcenes of them are laid. For, from what was obſerved under the foregoing head, we know that wherever Chriſtianity was preached, miracles were appealed to. Now as *Judæa* was the ſcene of all the miracles of *Jeſus*, ſo you cannot deny that it was in *Judæa* where Chriſtianity was firſt preached, and conſequently that the miracles appealed to by the firſt preachers of it, were appealed to on the very ſpot.

And as the miracles of *Jeſus*, were publiſhed at the time when, and in the places where ſaid to be wrought, ſo, it is very remarkable that the reporters of them do not content themſelves with aſſerting *Jeſus*'s miraculous power, in *general*, but are

at pains to deſcend to *particular* facts and inſtances of this power, which they relate with all their circumſtances—a method this which put it in every body's power to ſatisfy himſelf of the truth or falſehood of what they report.

When reports of miracles are deficient in this qualification, little credit can be paid to them, becauſe the perſons to whom they are propoſed, are left in the dark as to every particular neceſſary to be examined, before they can know whether they are impoſed upon or not.

But if we take the Goſpels into our hands, and examine the accounts we have of the miracles recorded of *Jeſus*, we ſhall, at firſt ſight, obſerve that every thing is mentioned by the reporters of them, that could be neceſſary to furniſh means for inquiring into their foundation and certainty.—They aſſert that *Jeſus*, for the ſpace of three or four years, went about through all *Judæa* performing his won-

derful works. And what theſe works were, they particularly relate—he turned water into wine; he fed thouſands by creating of food; he walked on the ſea; the elements obeyed him; he healed every infirmity of the people, by giving health to the blind, the lame, the paralytic, the lunatic, the maimed: and, to crown all, he reſtored life to the dead. And as they tell us the particular facts, ſo alſo do they relate the circumſtances. The ſcenes of them are not laid in corners, and in deſarts, where no witneſſes could ſee, and no inquirers confute; but in the moſt public places, in the towns and villages, before crowds of ſpectators, in the ſynagogues, in the ſtreets. Not content with teſtifying that *Jeſus* raiſed the dead, his hiſtorians mention the particular perſons thus raiſed, by their names, and ſpecify their place of abode. In a word, the accounts we have of the miracles of *Jeſus* ſeem to be drawn up by perſons confident that they could ſtand the teſt of any inquiry.

If, after all that has been ſaid, you ſhould ſtill inſiſt that theſe accounts of the miracles of *Jeſus* above referred to, were not written and publiſhed till length of time, and other circumſtances had deſtroyed the means of inquiry; I muſt here repeat what I have already obſerved, that, independently of the teſtimony of the Evangeliſts, we are morally certain that inſtances of *Jeſus*'s miraculous power were appealed to on the very ſpot, and while the facts were yet recent in every one's mind. His laſt, and his greateſt miracle, his own *reſurrection*, was, a fact which its preachers, from the beginning, boldly and confidently appealed to. Now this fact was ſo circumſtanced, that every inhabitant of *Jeruſalem* (and to them it was that *Jeſus* and the reſurrection were firſt preached) had it in his power to know, whether or no he was impoſed upon. And this you cannot but own, that they who furniſh their adverſaries with the means of detecting them, give no inſignificant proof

of their aſſerting nothing but what they knew to be true.

Enough has been ſaid to prove, that the miracles aſcribed to *Jeſus*, were appealed to at the very time, and on the very ſpot; and appealed to with ſuch circumſtances as enabled every body to examine into their pretenſions. But as I granted that there are ſome inſtances of ſpurious miracles, of which all this may be equally affirmed, before I can be authorized to pronounce that the Goſpel miracles are better ſupported than any of theſe pretences are, I muſt proceed to ſatisfy you,

Thirdly, that the circumſtances under which the miracles of *Jeſus* were publiſhed, give us an aſſurance that they underwent a ſtrict examination, and conſequently that they could not have eſcaped a detection had they been impoſtures.

Though ſome of the pretended miracles

rejected by us may be traced up to cotemporary witneſſes, and were publicly atteſted on the ſpot, yet that they underwent no examination, I inferred from this, that no inſtances of them could be produced which were not liable to one or both of the following objections—either that the perſons to whom the accounts of them were propoſed, were previouſly diſpoſed, through a blind credulity, and an eagerneſs of belief, to admit them unexamined,—or that the perſons who encouraged and promoted them, were armed with power which rendered any examination impracticable.—If, therefore, the reverſe ſhall appear to be the caſe with regard to the Goſpel miracles, you cannot, conſiſtently with your claim of impartiality, perſiſt in aſſerting that the former ſtand upon the ſame footing of credibility with the latter.

Firſt, then, I am to ſhew that the perſons who believed the miracles of *Jeſus* at their firſt publication, cannot be ſuppoſed

to have admitted them without careful examination of the evidence, and the cleareſt conviction of their truth.

Had *Jeſus* laid claim to miracles, without declaring the end propoſed by them, in this caſe, as the facts would not have been generally intereſting, few or none would have thought it worth while to examine into them. They might, then, have paſſed on, without notice, in their own age, and owed their future credit to the contempt they were treated with at firſt; which has, no doubt, frequently ſcreened forged miracles from a formal detection. But when we conſider what the Goſpel miracles were connected with; that they were works urged by *Jeſus* their performer as the foundation of a new religion, here the importance of the end left it no longer a matter of indifference whether they were true or falſe, but every one to whom they were propoſed, muſt have had a ſufficient motive to weigh the evidence of them, with care and diligence.

This argument acquires double ſtrength when we conſider, that the religion in confirmation of which the miracles of *Jeſus* were appealed to, was ſubverſive of *that* believed by thoſe, to whom they were propoſed. That pretenſions to miracles whoſe end was to confirm opinions and doctrines already eſtabliſhed, ſhould be admitted without due examination, by the favourers of ſuch opinions, is not at all to be wondered at; and this, as I have obſerved, greatly invalidates the moſt boaſted wonders of *Popery*. But the miracles of *Jeſus*, whoſe end was not to countenance but to overturn the eſtabliſhed doctrines, could not poſſibly meet with an eaſy reception: aſſent to them would be difficult to be obtained, and never could be obtained, without ſerious examination and the ſtrongeſt conviction. Other pretenſions to miracles did not gain credit, but after the eſtabliſhment of thoſe opinions which they were thought to confirm, and amongſt perſons previouſly biaſſed in favour of thoſe opinions. But every thing

is the reverſe with regard to the miracles of *Jeſus;* for they were previous to the belief of Chriſtianity, and gave cauſe to the belief of it: every witneſs of them was a convert, and every believer had been an enemy.

But it has been alleged, that the *Jews*, in general, were extremely credulous, and prone to give credit to ſtories of the miraculous kind; and that, therefore, there is room for a ſuſpicion, that ſome of them might admit the miracles of *Jeſus*, without ſufficient grounds and careful examination of the evidence.—In anſwer to this, ſuffer me to obſerve, that granting the *Jewiſh* nation to be ever ſo much diſpoſed to believe pretences to miracles, the end for which thoſe of *Jeſus* were ſaid to be wrought, muſt have hindered this general diſpoſition from operating, ſo as to make them receive theſe particular miracles, upon ſlight grounds. However apt any one may be to admit ſtories of the miraculous kind, yet he will not believe,

haſtily, ſuch as have an obvious tendency to overturn his favourite ſentiments. The cauſe of his too eaſy aſſent ceaſes here. So long as the miracles ſtrike in with, and confirm his ſettled opinions and prejudices, they will be too eaſily admitted: but when once theſe begin to interfere,—the more of credulity and enthuſiaſm there is in his temper, it will be the more difficult to obtain his aſſent. For inſtance; take one from any of the ſects of *enthuſiaſts* amongſt Chriſtians—a *Quaker*, we will ſuppoſe, or a *Methodiſt*. How ready ſhall we find ſuch a perſon to believe, upon the ſlighteſt grounds, the truth of a divine revelation or inſpiration pretended to by one of his own ſect, and which tends to confirm its favourite doctrines? Being extremely credulous, as we ſuppoſe from his general character, it is natural to imagine that he will greedily embrace, without weighing the evidence, a fact highly agreeable to his pre-conceived opinions, and which, indeed, he cannot examine, coolly and impartially, through the previous

biaſs of his mind.—But put the caſe that the ſame credulous *Methodiſt*, is attacked on the footing of one's having had a revelation, which expreſsly condemned the tenets of Methodiſm; will the general credulity of his temper, induce him to give this a ready admiſſion? The reverſe is obvious: the more of enthuſiaſm and credulity there is in him, the leſs liable will he be to be convinced. His prejudices will be too ſtrong, for the evidence of what is ſo diſagreeable to him; or if he be convinced, the conviction of one ſo averſe to it, will be no weak motive to our believing, that ſuch a revelation, to be believed by ſuch a perſon, muſt have had very glaring marks of truth.

Suppoſing, therefore, what is objected, to be true (though I ſee no ſufficient grounds for ſuch a ſuppoſition) that the Diſciples of *Jeſus*, under which name I include, with the Apoſtles, the whole multitude of believing *Jews*, were credulous perſons, and previouſly diſpoſed to believe

miracles on ſlight grounds; yet, when we conſider that the miracles of *Jeſus* were connected with doctrines, ſubverſive of thoſe which education and prejudice had rooted in their minds—from this we may infer, that their general credulity, would rather obſtruct than promote their converſion, and, conſequently, that before ſuch perſons admitted *Jeſus*'s claim to be a Divine Teacher, they had carefully attended to the evidence of thoſe miraculous facts, on the truth of which this claim was founded.

This may ſuffice, to prove, that the pretenſions of *Jeſus* to be a worker of miracles, could never owe the credit they met with to credulity and eagerneſs of belief, on the part of thoſe to whom they were propoſed; I come, now, to ſhew that on the part of thoſe who encouraged and atteſted them, there was not only no poſſibility of a confederacy ſtrong enough to obſtruct an examination of the facts, but farther, that the perſons who had all the

means of examination in their hands, actually put their power in execution, in order, if poſſible, to detect them.

Miracles the offspring of impoſture, can never have any chance to gain credit, or paſs undetected, in the time, or at the place where they are pretended to be wrought, unleſs there is a ſtrong confederacy on foot, privy to the impoſture, and engaged to carry it on; and this, as I obſerved, has been generally the caſe of the moſt noted pretenſions of *Popery*. But we have the fulleſt aſſurance that can poſſibly be had, that there was not any ſuch confederacy on foot, to propagate the miracles of *Jeſus*. Had Chriſtianity, indeed, been a religion already eſtabliſhed in the world when theſe miracles were pretended to, and previouſly believed by thoſe who believed the miracles, a combination to deceive the public might have been poſſible, and the very poſſibility of ſuch a combination would juſtly have excited ſuſpicions of its being real. But when we

reflect from what beginnings Chriſtianity aroſe, and in what manner it made its entrance into the world—That *Jeſus*, the great founder of it, had not one follower when he ſet up his claim, and that it was his miracles which gave birth to his ſect, not the ſect, already eſtabliſhed, that appealed to his miracles, from theſe circumſtances we may conclude unexceptionably, that there could not poſſibly be a confederacy ſtrong enough to obſtruct an examination of the facts, and obtrude a hiſtory of lies upon the public.

But why need I inſiſt upon this, when I can urge, farther, that, even, though there had been a confederacy amongſt the witneſſes of the Goſpel miracles, this could not have ſcreened them from detection, as the perſons who had all the means of inquiry in their hands, were engaged in intereſt to exert themſelves on the occaſion, nay, actually did put their power in execution, againſt the reporters of theſe miracles?

Forged miracles may paſs current, where power and authority ſcreen them from the too nice inquiry of examiners. But whenever it ſhall happen that thoſe who are veſted with the ſupreme power are bent upon oppoſing and detecting them, the progreſs which they make can be but ſmall, before the impoſture is diſcovered, and ſinks into obſcurity and contempt. If this obſervation be well founded, as I am confident it is, that lying wonders ſhould paſs undetected amongſt the *Papiſts* will not be thought ſtrange; for, as I have already mentioned, ſuch ſtories, amongſt them, have generally been countenanced, if not invented, by thoſe with whom, alone, the power of detecting the impoſture, and of puniſhing the impoſtors was lodged.—Now the miracles of *Jeſus*, it is notorious, were not thus ſheltered. The evident, the declared tendency of his works, was to introduce a total change into the ſtate of the world, with regard to religious opinions. It is then to be thought, that thoſe who were veſted with

the ſupreme power, would look on, with indifference, and allow this change to be brought about; a change which their intereſt prompted, and which their prejudices biaſſed them to prevent, and which, had there been any impoſture in the caſe, they could have prevented, with the utmoſt eaſe, and in the moſt effectual manner, by examining into the facts appealed to, and dragging out the impoſtors to public infamy?—Accordingly we find, from hiſtory, that, from the very beginning, oppoſition of every kind was made to check the progreſs of Chriſtianity, by the rulers in that part of the world where it was firſt preached—*Jeſus*, the great founder of it, was put to an ignominious death, and the perſons who witneſſed his miracles, on the very ſpot where they had been performed, were beaten, impriſoned, ſcourged, and ſtoned. That there was no impoſture detected, therefore, could not be owing to want of proper examination. For, we ſee, that they, who were beſt furniſhed with the means of inquiry and op-

poſition, did all they could; whom they could not confute, they puniſhed; whom they could not brand as impoſtors, they crowned as martyrs.

But, perhaps, you will object—what aſſurance have we that the witneſſes of the miracles of *Jeſus* were not detected? How can we be certain that the *Jewiſh* prieſts, and rulers did not convict them of impoſture, by diſproving the wondrous works aſcribed by them to their maſter? —Such an objection, though it may be urged by one who is reſolved not to be convinced, can never be offered by any impartial inquirer after truth. We have as great certainty, as from the nature of the thing can be expected, that no ſuch detection ever was made. Had the witneſſes of *Jeſus*'s miracles been convicted of impoſture, is it to be imagined that this remarkable fact would not have been handed down to poſterity? And yet no ſuch thing is mentioned in any one hiſtory, in any one writer, either amongſt the *Jews*,

or amongſt the *Pagans*. On the contrary, it is a point not to be controverted, that the truth of the facts was admitted by the enemies of Chriſtianity, in general. For can it be imagined that if the Goſpel miracles had been looked upon, by them, as mere forgeries, that the *Jewiſh rabbins* would have imagined their ridiculous ſolution of them, by aſcribing them to *Jeſus*'s having ſtolen the ineffable name of *Jehovah* out of the temple *, or that *Hierocles* †, *Celſus* ‡, *Julian* §, and the reſt of

* See their Talmudical book called Avoda Zara, or of Idolatry, publiſhed by Edzard, at Hamburgh, in 4to, 1705.

† ἡμεις μεν τον τοιαυτα πεποιηκοτα (meaning Apollonius of Tyana) ου θεον, αλλα θεοις κεχαρισμενον ανδρα· ἡγουμεθα. Οι δε δι' ολιγας τερατειας τινας τον Ιησον Θεον αναγορευουσι. Hierocles apud Euſebium. In this quotation, Hierocles compares the miracles of Apollonius with thoſe of Jeſus, the truth of which he evidently admits, and only blames the Chriſtians for worſhipping Jeſus as a God.

‡ ανεπλασε δε τι ἑτερον συγκατατιθεμενος μεν, πως ταις παραδοξοις δυναμεσιν ἁς Ιησους εποιησεν, εν ἁις τους πολλους επεισεν ακολουθειν αυτω ὡς Χριστω. διαβαλλειν δ' αυτας βουλομενος ὡς απο μαγειας και ου θεια δυναμει γεγεννημενας. φησι, γαρ, αυτον σκοτιον τραφεντα μισθαρνησαντα εις Αιγυπτον, δυναμεων τινων πειραθεντα; ἐκειθεν επανελθειν, Θεον δ' ἑκειναις τας δυναμεις ἑαυτον αναγορευοντα.

the heathen antagoniſts would have endeavoured to account for them, by magic? And if theſe champions againſt the Goſpel, in its earlieſt ages, had it not in their power to call in queſtion the truth of the miracles of *Jeſus*, how unreaſonable would it be, at our time of day, to pretend that ſuch detection ever was made? —Beſides; had the charge of impoſture been fixed, upon the witneſſes of theſe miracles, is it to be imagined, that they could have made ſo much as one convert? If, for inſtance, the truth of their maſter's reſurrection could have been

—Origen contra Celſum, L. I. P. 30. Ed. Spenſ. The meaning of which quotation is, that Celſus, though he owned that Jeſus performed miracles, aſcribed them to magic, affirming that Jeſus having been educated in Egypt, had there learnt their art of doing wonders.

§ Ὁ δε Ιησους---ολιγους προς τοις τριακοσιοις ενιαυτοις ονομαζεται, εργασαμενος παρ' ὁν εζη χρονον εργον ουδεν ακοης αξιον, ει μη τις οιεται τους κυλλους και τυφλους ιασαθαι και διαμονωντας εφορκιζειν, εν Βηθσαϊδα και εν Βηθανια ταις κωμαις, των μεγιστων εργων ειναι. Julian apud Cyril, L. 6. Though Julian here ſpeaks of the miracles of Jeſus with the utmoſt contempt, he admits their truth.

overturned, is it to be imagined, that, within fifty days after it was ſaid to have happened, the diſcourſe of *St. Peter*, in which this miracle was ſo ſtrongly inſiſted upon, could have added three thouſand to the faith?—Had the miracles appealed to by the firſt preachers of Chriſtianity, been detected to be falſe, the ſame age, and the ſame place which ſaw this religion firſt preached, would have ſeen it forgotten in oblivion, and contempt.

As, therefore, the miracles of *Jeſus* did not eſcape detection from want of examination, at their firſt publication, I here repeat what I have aimed to prove (I hope, not altogether without ſucceſs) that they ſtand upon a ſtronger teſtimony than the ſpurious pretences, which have been repreſented as vying with them. For though, ſome of theſe, as I have granted, may, equally with thoſe of the Goſpels, be traced up to cotemporary witneſſes, and be allowed to have been publiſhed on the ſpot, yet I am confident,

that you cannot produce any one inſtance, amongſt the endleſs catalogue of them, where it will not be eaſy, from the circumſtances of the caſe, to ſatisfy you, that, if the impoſture eſcaped detection, it eſcaped it becauſe it was propoſed to thoſe who *did* not examine it, or was ſheltered and protected by thoſe, who had it in their power to prevent any examination.

But the Proteſtant Chriſtian is not warranted to admit the miracles recorded in his New Teſtament, while he rejects thoſe of a later date, *merely* becauſe the *former* are better atteſted than the *latter*.—His reaſons, for making the diſtinction, will appear to ſtill greater advantage, if I can prove, as I propoſed, that the teſtimony which ſupports the miracles of the New Teſtament, is not only *ſtronger* than that, which ſupports any pretended wonders, but alſo the *ſtrongeſt* that can be ſuppoſed, or that, from the nature of the thing, could be had.

Two qualifications muſt concur, to eſtabliſh the credibility of witneſſes; a ſufficient knowledge of the matters of fact they atteſt, and a diſpoſition not to falſify what they know. And when theſe two qualifications do concur we think ourſelves obliged to admit what is atteſted, as true.

Now; that the perſons, whoſe teſtimony we have for the miracles of *Jeſus*, had the firſt qualification, it would be impertinent in me to ſuppoſe that you can diſpute. Let us, then, ſee whether they can be proved to have had the other qualification alſo: and, I flatter myſelf, that I ſhall be able to ſhew that they had it; and that, if ever there can be any aſſurance of the integrity of witneſſes, in any one inſtance, we have ſuch an aſſurance, with regard to the witneſſes of the miracles of *Jeſus*.

That any credit is paid to human teſtimony is, in general, owing to the knowledge we have of human nature; which is ſo conſtituted, that men cannot be ſup-

poſed capable of giving a falſe atteſtation, when they are not under the influence of intereſted views, and ſelfiſh paſſions; much leſs when, by ſo doing, they contradict every intereſted motive of action. Now, that the witneſſes of the miracles of *Jeſus* were in ſuch circumſtances, that they not only had no temptations to give a falſe atteſtation, but, on the contrary, were reſtrained by the ſtrongeſt motives that can influence men, from doing this, will, I think, appear if we attend to the following obvious reflections.

Was their preaching of Chriſt, and bearing witneſs to his miracles, the road to greatneſs, and the means of rewards from the rulers of their nation?—The reverſe happens to be the caſe. Far from having this temptation, their teſtimony expoſed them to every hardſhip that power could inflict, and to every diſtreſs that human nature could ſuffer. They had, but, a little before, ſeen their maſter crucified, for aſſuming the character of a Teacher

from God. Is it, therefore, to be conceived that had they known him to be an impoſtor, they would have ventured to back his pretenſions, when they could not but expect to meet with his fate?

But, perhaps, love of fame, and ambition to be looked upon as the founders of a new ſect, may be thought motives ſufficient to account for their impoſing upon the world.—A ſuppoſition this, moſt evidently groundleſs. The ſchemes of men, generally ſpeaking, bear ſome reference to their ſtation in life. Can it be imagined, therefore, that ſuch a ſcheme of acquiring glory, by founding a new religion, on the ruins of thoſe eſtabliſhed in the world, could ever enter the imaginations of perſons in ſo mean a ſtation of life, as were the firſt preachers of Chriſtianity?

Or granting it poſſible, that while they were in their fiſhing-boats, they might entertain the idea of making themſelves famous, by founding a religion, yet, in fact,

we find, that they gave this honour to another, aſſuming no higher character than that of his miniſters and ſervants. To him, therefore, all the fame of founding the new religion was due.—Should it be alleged, that, though they did not found the religion in their own names, the honour of being looked upon as the firſt miniſters and favourites of a Divine Teacher, may account for their confederating to impoſe upon the world.—In anſwer to this, I would beg you to reflect who the perſon was, under whoſe banner they inliſted themſelves—*Jeſus*, reputed the ſon of a carpenter; a man, obſcure in his birth, and wretched throughout his life. which was cloſed, by an ignominious death. Had they been impoſtors and actuated by the love of fame, is it to be ſuppoſed that they would have choſen ſuch a one for their lord and maſter? Would they have taken a leader from the accurſed tree? *Jeſus crucified was to the* Jews *a ſtumbling-block, and to the* Greeks *foolishneſs.* If glory, therefore, was their

aim, this could not be got by profeſſing themſelves his followers. The diſciples could not expect to be in greater eſteem than the maſter; and if he was deſpiſed and rejected of men, they could not hope to be treated with diſtinction and honour.

Let us next ſee whether the proſpect of appropriating to themſelves the wealth of thoſe whom they might convert, can be ſuppoſed to have influenced them. Alas! what hopes could they have of any gain, by preaching not to the high and mighty, but to the indigent and humble? Or, admitting what undoubtedly happened, that there were perſons poſſeſſed of conſiderable property, amongſt the believers in *Jeſus*, yet ſo far were the Apoſtles from having any lucrative views, that when the firſt converts ſold their poſſeſſions, and brought them the money, they declined being concerned in the diſtribution of it; and deacons were appointed, who might have the charge of it, and miniſter to the wants of the poor.

Uninfluenced, as the witneſſes of *Jeſus*'s miracles were, by the intereſted motives of reputation and honour, or by the more ſordid views of gain, perhaps it will be ſaid, that their aim was to gratify ſome favourite paſſion and irregular luſt.—And, indeed, religion has been, but too frequently, made a cloak to irregularities of every kind; and under name of Teachers from Heaven, impoſtors have ſanctified the vileſt of crimes. But the known, the acknowledged purity of manners, and unblameable lives of the Diſciples of *Jeſus* leave no room for any ſuſpicion of this kind. The bittereſt enemies of Chriſtianity, in the earlieſt ages, never could attack the moral characters of its publiſhers. Their doctrine breathed nothing but peace, but friendſhip, but piety, but benevolence; and their lives correſponded with their doctrine. *Ye are witneſſes and God alſo* (could they ſay) *how holily, juſtly and unblameably we have behaved ourſelves amongſt you that believed, not handling the word of God craftily, but by manifeſtation*

of the truth commending ourſelves to every man's conſcience, in the ſight of God.

In a word; let us examine our hearts; let us revolve in our minds, every motive and ſpring of action that human nature is liable to be influenced by; and we ſhall not be able to find out any one intereſted view which the Apoſtles could have, in bearing witneſs to the miracles of *Jeſus*. Shall we then ſay they bore witneſs to a lie, and that they were impoſtors?—If they were, they muſt be owned to be the only impoſtors who have ever appeared, who gained nothing, or could propoſe to gain nothing by their impoſture.

But, here, perhaps, you will urge to me the authority of the author of the *Free Inquiry*, who ſays that the integrity of a witneſs of miracles is to be ſuſpected —*if he had any favourite opinion to recommend by the authority of ſuch works; becauſe a pretenſion to miracles has, in all ages and nations, been found the moſt effec-*

tual inſtrument of impoſtors, towards deluding the multitude, and gaining their end upon them *. Far be it from me to aſſert, that this general obſervation was meant to weaken the aſſurance which we have of the integrity of the firſt publiſhers of Chriſtianity. However, as I know that, in your opinion, it does extend to their caſe, it becomes neceſſary for me to ſhew that, though the Apoſtles *had favourite opinions to recommend by the authority of their maſter's miracles*, there is, nevertheleſs, not the leaſt ground for a ſuſpicion of their integrity as witneſſes of them.

And, firſt, I would remark, that the opinions recommended by the Apoſtles on the credit of *Jeſus*'s miracles, had not *always* been favourite ones with them. They were opinions, which they, as profeſſors of the *Jewiſh* religion, could not but have been, at firſt, highly prejudiced againſt. *Their* teſtimony, therefore, to miracles

* Dr. Middleton's Free Inquiry, p. 218.

confirming theſe opinions, is, in effect, the teſtimony of adverſaries.

But, ſecondly; though it muſt be granted that men will go great lengths, to recommend favourite opinions; and though it is not to be denied that hiſtory furniſhes us with inſtances of ſome who, in order to eſtabliſh ſuch opinions, have not ſcrupled to deceive the world by pretenſions to miracles—though, this, I ſay, muſt be granted, yet, is it to be imagined that, in caſes of this kind, men will always go *all* lengths? Common ſenſe tells us they will not; tells us that the conduct of men, in this reſpect, will vary according as circumſtances vary; and that, while ſome ſituations may be ſo favourable as to encourage them to attempt an impoſture, other ſituations may be ſuppoſed, ſo unfavourable, as that any attempt of this kind would be the height of madneſs and folly. To apply this to the preſent argument.

Though hiſtory furniſhes us with many inſtances of forged miracles, yet it is very remarkable that both amongſt the *Pagans* of old, and amongſt Chriſtians in later ages, the authors or encouragers of theſe impoſtures, have been placed in ſuch circumſtances, that they had reaſon to fear no inconveniences on account of their teſtimony. They have not only thought themſelves powerful enough to ſcreen their forgeries from a detection; but, farther, in caſe of being detected, they were free from the apprehenſion of any puniſhment becauſe they had in their own hands, or, at leaſt, under their own influence, the power of inflicting it. But very different were the circumſtances under which the witneſſes of the miracles of *Jeſus* appealed to theſe works. Here the weak and unaſſiſted were the publiſhers of the miracles,—and the ſtrong and mighty, the rulers of the world, the oppoſers: here every opportunity and means of diſcovering any impoſture, was in the hands of thoſe who

were to be impoſed upon; and the power of puniſhing; a power which we know was actually exerciſed with all the rage and violence of cruelty. For the Chriſtian may challenge his adverſary to produce, though he turn over every hiſtory of every nation, any one inſtance where the witneſſes of any fact, ſuffered, in the manner the witneſſes of the miracles of *Jeſus* did, for the ſake of what they atteſted. For, as we have ſeen, that no temptations of pleaſure, or profit, or ambition, could influence them, ſo every view of intereſt was ſacrificed by them; they not only gained nothing, but they loſt every thing, on account of their teſtimony. Diſtreſs, miſery, perſecution of every kind, nay even death itſelf, dreſſed in its moſt frightful terrors, were their envied reward. And if this their behaviour, in ſuch circumſtances, cannot give us an aſſurance of their integrity, the credibility and integrity of witneſſes can be diſcovered in no inſtance, and human teſtimony muſt be given up as entirely uſeleſs.

And now I am naturally led to conſider the force of the argument in defence of the Goſpel miracles, drawn from the martyrdom of the eye witneſſes of them, againſt which it is common to hear from your quarter, objections to this purpoſe, "That there have been martyrs amongſt "the profeſſors of what is called the falſe, "as well as amongſt the profeſſors of the "true religion; that hiſtory preſents us "with inſtances of multitudes, who have "laid down their lives in teſtimony of "the truth of the wildeſt ſyſtems of ſu-"perſtition; and that, therefore, a mark "which may belong to any religion, how-"ever falſe, can never be a mark by which "to prove Chriſtianity to be true."

In anſwer to this; I would beg leave to obſerve, what, I think cannot be denied; that when a perſon dies martyr to any religion, that he ſhould renounce his life rather than renounce his opinion, proves abſolutely that he was ſincere, and believed his opinion to be right; at leaſt,

no higher proof of ſincerity can be given. But a man's believing his opinion to be true, is no proof that it really is ſo. The *Pagan*, the *Jew*, the *Mahometan*, as well as the Chriſtian, thinks himſelf in the right; and this is the effect of accidental, external circumſtances, which give a biaſs to the mind. Whenever, therefore, our opinions have been determined by ſuch accidental circumſtances, then our martyrdom for them will prove nothing, but that we are ſincere in believing principles to be true, which notwithſtanding, may be falſe.

But, with regard to the Apoſtles, we have almoſt an infallible aſſurance, that the opinions which they ſealed with their blood, were not the effect of accidental biaſſes on their minds, by means of which error is embraced as frequently as truth; but that they were founded on a *rational conviction*. They had all been bred up in the belief of notions widely different. Education, prejudice, enthuſiaſm, and

indeed, all the other cauſes which, in the uſual courſe of things, concur in forming men's opinions. oppoſed their embracing the doctrines of the Goſpel. Their having embraced theſe doctrines cannot, therefore, be accounted for, in the manner we account for the belief of erroneous opinions. How, then, can we account for their embracing them? only one way: —we muſt admit, what they affirm to have been the caſe, that they were convinced by miracles; by the moſt ſtupendous works performed by *Jeſus*, during the ſpace of three or four years, works which ſtamped the authority of Heaven on his words. So that their becoming Chriſtans did not happen from truſting to their own fallible judgment, or that of others, but from believing their own *ſenſes*.

The Apoſtles, therefore, and witneſſes of *Jeſus*'s miracles, if we would repreſent their caſe fairly, are not to be conſidered as dying for *ſpeculative opinions*, which might be falſe though they believed them

to be true; but they are to be conſidered as witneſſes of what they themſelves had ſeen,—as dying, for the truth of *matters of fact*.

Now though men may believe ſpeculative opinions to be true, which are falſe, yet is it ſcarcely to be conceived that they can ever ſo far deceive themſelves, as to believe they ſaw facts which they did not really ſee. If ever this happened, it can be accounted for, on no other principle than of the power of imagination, which often has ſtrange effects on the perceptions of an *enthuſiaſtic* or diſordered brain *.

* Tam ſtupenda autem eſt imaginandi vis, ut non minus falſæ quam veræ imagines afficiant, ubi mens iis aſſidue ſit addicta.—Omnibus notam eſt, quam mirabilibus modis in melancholicis mens perturbatur. Hic ex vitro caput ſibi fictum putat, &, ne frangatur, foras prodire metuit. Ille ſe mortuum eſſe credit, & cum mortuis ſine cibo debere verſari. Talia ſexcenta memorantur. Memini me noviſſe virum literatum, qui ſe in ventre infantem geſtare affirmaret, de quo in lucem edendo valde ſolicitus erat. Duos etiam vidi, qui, cum ſoli eſſent, voces ſibi in aures loquentium audire putabant. Neque alia, ut opinor, conditio eſt

The enthuſiaſt may poſſibly fancy he ſees objects which no where exiſt, in the ſame manner as he is poſitive that he has converſations with God, and can miſtake the wild rovings of his own fancy, for impulſes of the Divine Spirit. This, I ſay, may poſſibly happen, though, I believe, very few inſtances of it can be aſſigned; or, if any inſtances, at all, can be aſſigned, they are of *ſingle perſons*, each deceived as to the exiſtence of a different fact; not of any *conſiderable number of perſons* uniformly deceived as to the exiſtence of the ſame facts. And, therefore, when ſo many perſons, witneſſes of the miracles of *Jeſus*, agreed in the ſame teſtimony, we may be certain, that the matter of their teſtimony muſt have had ſome external ſource or cauſe, really exiſting, and operating, uniformly, on the ſenſes of every one of them.

illorum, qui larvas & ſpectra oculis cernere ſibi perſuadent. Sunt enim deliria quaſi ſomnia vigilantium, & in utriſque pariter mens, pro natura ſpecierum objectarum, diverſimode corpus agitat.

Mead, Medica Sacra, p. 73.

Beſides, that they were not miſled by enthuſiaſm, to fancy they had ſeen what never happened, is to be inferred from this conſideration, that *enthuſiaſm* always acts in conformity to the favourite notions of the perſon who is heated by it, and, as an * eminent writer expreſſes himſelf, *it can no more work againſt them, than a rapid river can carry a boat againſt its own ſtream.* How, then, can it be ſuppoſed that enthuſiaſm will account for the belief of the witneſſes of the Goſpel miracles, when we can be certain that their imaginations were not, at leaſt from the beginning, heated, in favour of Chriſtianity? That ſuch perſons ſhould ſeal their teſtimony with their blood, is the higheſt proof that can be given, not only that they ſincerely

* See, Obſervations on the Converſion of St. Paul; the ſolid arguments of which ſhort, but maſterly, performance, though drawn up ſo as to be perſonal to St. Paul, may, by a very ſmall alteration, be applied to eſtabliſh the characters of all the Apoſtles, and firſt preachers of Chriſtianity.

believed what they atteſted, but that what they atteſted, had really happened.

But there is ſtill another objection to be taken notice of—" That the hiſtory of " mankind abounds with inſtances of per- " ſons dying with a lie in their mouths: " particularly, the caſes of malefactors " who, though certainly guilty of the " facts laid to their charge, perſiſt in de- " nying them with their lateſt breath, are " urged to ſhew that, though the witneſſes " of the miracles of *Jeſus* ſealed their teſ- " timony with their blood, this is no cer- " tain mark that what they atteſted was " true."—As an anſwer to this; I think there is not the leaſt reſemblance between a malefactor's denying his crime, and the publiſhers of Chriſtianity aſſerting the truth of their maſter's miracles, in their laſt moments. A malefactor may think the confident denial of his crime a probable means of procuring a pardon; or, if he has no hopes of ſaving his life, ſhame and obſtinacy may induce him

to perſiſt in declaring his innocence, as a confeſſion of his guilt would not better his condition. Whereas, the witneſſes of the miracles of *Jeſus*, were brought to ſuffer for no other crime but their teſtimony; and had it in their power to eſcape their unhappy fate by retracting it. This, you will obſerve, makes a wide difference. Could you, indeed, produce inſtances of a number of malefactors who perſiſt in denying their guilt, though a pardon be offered on condition of a confeſſion of it, this would be ſomething to your purpoſe. But that ever any ſuch inſtance has happened, or ever can happen unleſs in the caſe of a diſordered judgment, cannot be affirmed by any one who is, in the leaſt, acquainted with the frame of human nature. And yet this muſt be affirmed by you, otherwiſe the laſt-mentioned objection is foreign to the purpoſe *.

* It may be proper juſt to hint, that the diſparaging repreſentation, which Dr. Middleton gives us, in his *Free Inquiry*, of the views and motives that influenced the martyrs of the primitive ages of Chriſtianity (a repreſenta-

If what has been offered, under this head, do not ſatisfy you that the teſtimony for the miracles of *Jeſus* is as ſtrong as any teſtimony can be, I own I ſhall be at a loſs to gueſs at any cauſes of your continuing unconvinced, conſiſtent with your profeſſions of being open to conviction.

But the miracles of *Jeſus*, are not the only ones on which Chriſtianity is built. For the very ſame perſons who gave ſuch remarkable proofs of integrity as witneſſes of them, claimed alſo to themſelves a power of performing works equally miraculous. The pretended miracles which have

tion, by the bye, as uncandid, as it is ſatirical) does not affect the force of the argument for the truth of the miracles of Jeſus drawn from the martyrdom of the Apoſtles, and other Diſciples eye-witneſſes of theſe miracles; nor from the martyrdom of the eye-witneſſes of the miracles of the preachers of the Goſpel in the Apoſtolic age. All theſe martyrs died atteſting matters of fact which they themſelves had ſeen; this could not be affirmed, by the Doctor, to be the caſe of the martyrs of the ſecond and third centuries, who are the perſons whoſe characters he places in ſo unfavourable a light.—See the *Free Inquiry*, from p. 200, to 214.

ſometimes been repreſented by unbelievers, as on the ſame footing of credibility with thoſe recorded in the New Teſtament, have, generally, been ſingle facts, or, at leaſt, facts related of one ſingle perſon. Whereas, it is not one miracle, nor the miracles of one perſon alone, that we urge; but a ſucceſſion of miracles, carried on, and performed through a long tract of time, by different perſons, in different places, all co-operating towards the ſame end—the eſtabliſhment of the religion taught by *Jeſus*. Let us, therefore, now examine whether there be any defect in the evidence, on the ſtrength of which we believe that the firſt preachers of Chriſtianity, *Jeſus*'s Diſciples, and thoſe whom they aſſociated to themſelves, were really veſted with a ſupernatural power.

Now, that after *Jeſus* had been put to death in *Judæa*, his Diſciples ſeparated themſelves, throughout the wide extent of the *Roman* empire, preaching faith in

their crucified maſter, and aſſuming to themſelves a power of working miracles, as proofs of their being Teachers from God, theſe are facts not only affirmed by the writer of their *acts*, himſelf an eye-witneſs, and companion of ſome of them, but which appear alſo from their own epiſtles, addreſſed to the converts whom they had made in different parts of the world.

Should you deny theſe writings to be genuine, and affirm them to be the production of a later age (though he who would affirm this will never be able to prove it) yet ſtill a full aſſurance could be had, that the Diſciples of *Jeſus* really laid claim to miraculous powers, and that this claim was well known at the time, and in the very places when and where it is ſaid to be made. For that Chriſtianity was profeſſed to be received in the world. upon the belief of miracles; or that its firſt converts alleged, as the motive of

their converſion, the miracles of its preachers, is a fact allowed, and which muſt be allowed, by every one who knows that Chriſtianity was then preached. "And "(as is obſerved by one of the moſt "powerful champions which the Goſpel "has had in this, or indeed in any age) "this their teſtimony is the ſame kind of "evidence for thoſe miracles, as if they "had put it in writing, and theſe writings "had come down to us. And it is real "evidence, becauſe it is of facts, which "they had capacity and full opportunity "to inform themſelves of. It is alſo diſ-"tinct from the direct or expreſs hiſtori-"cal evidence, though it is of the ſame "kind: and it would be allowed to be "diſtinct in all caſes. For were a fact "related by one or more ancient hiſtori-"ans, and diſputed in after-ages, that this "fact is acknowledged to have been be-"lieved by great numbers of the age, in "which the hiſtorian ſays it was done, "would be allowed an additional proof "of ſuch fact, quite diſtinct from the ex-

" preſs teſtimony of the hiſtorian *." So that the converſion of ſo many, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, to Chriſtianity, in the time of the Apoſtles, on the ſtrength of miracles, is a proof that miracles were pretended to in that age, diſtinct from the teſtimony of the writer of the *Acts of the Apoſtles*, and of the writers of the *Epiſtles*, and would have been ſufficient evidence of the fact, even although no cotemporary hiſtorian had put it into writing.

The next conſideration, therefore, which naturally preſents itſelf is, whether theſe pretenſions to miracles of the firſt preachers of Chriſtianity were ever detected to be falſe.—That there never was any ſuch detection, every impartial inquirer will conclude, when he reflects that, if this had happened, it muſt have been handed down to us, and would have been ſo much improved by the enemies of the Goſpel, who

* See the late Biſhop of Durham's Analogy of Religion, p. 355.

had power, learning, and the prejudices of the people on their ſide, as muſt have checked its propagation for ever.—But I decline enlarging on this argument, not only becauſe what was offered with regard to the miracles of *Jeſus* may be applied to thoſe of his own Diſciples, but, alſo, becauſe a modern unbeliever will hardly venture to affirm, what his predeceſſors in the earlieſt ages, had it not in their power to do *.

And as the miracles of the Apoſtolical age, never were detected to be impoſtures, let us, next, ſee whether ſuch circumſtances did not attend them, as prove that, had they been impoſtures, they could not have avoided a detection.

* Julian ſpeaking of St. Paul, calleth him τον παντας παταχου τους πωποτε γοητας και απατεωνας ὑπερβαλλομενον Παυλον. Apud Cyril. L. 3. One who excelled every other deceiver by tricks he performed through the power of magic. So that here is a confeſſion of the facts, while they are vilified by aſcribing them to a reproachful cauſe.

Conſider, then, firſt, the length of time during which this pretenſion to miracles was kept up. Now from the commencement of the miniſtry of the Apoſtles, to the death of *St. John*, who ſurvived all the reſt, a period of above threeſcore years elapſed. Is it then, at all, credible, that a ſyſtem of fraud ſhould not have betrayed itſelf in leſs time than this? When miracles are the arts of the few to impoſe upon the many, this, of neceſſity, contracts the duration of the pretenſion to them; becauſe frauds, of long continuance cannot always keep in the ſame hands. In order to carry them on, there muſt be a ſucceſſion of confederates; and ſuch a ſucceſſion would produce a detection of the whole. Beſides, as every repetition of an impoſture endangers its credit, it is no inconſiderable proof that the miracles of the inſpired publiſhers of Chriſtianity were not impoſtures, ſince, though repeated for ſixty years, their credit remained unſhaken.

This receives additional weight when we conſider, that theſe miracles were not confined to one particular ſpot, and to one particular ſet of witneſſes; but the ſcenes of them were laid in moſt of the great cities, throughout the wide extent of the *Roman* empire.—If the workers of them had remained fixed at *Jeruſalem*, or if, when they did preach the Goſpel at other places, they had all moved thither in a body, ſuch a ſituation might have enabled them to ſet a confederacy on foot; and it might poſſibly have been alleged, that their pretenſion to miracles was backed by a party previouſly inclined, nay intereſted to ſupport them. But, now, all pretence for ſuch a ſuſpicion is cut off. The Apoſtles, unlike to confederated impoſtors, did not keep in a body, to aid and ſupport each other, but ſeparated themſelves to the different corners of the earth:—a conduct this, which as it was neceſſary in order to propagate their religion, would have been the height of folly, had their religion been built on fraud and

forgery. By ſeparating in this manner, a ſcheme of fraud muſt have dwindled to nothing; no regular plan could be purſued, no unity of deſign could have ſubſiſted, no community of intereſts been preſerved. In a word, this conduct, renders the ſuppoſition of a confederacy abſurd, becauſe it put it out of their own power to have any number of confederates. For they could not poſſibly meet with any party, in the cities where they firſt preached, inclined to ſupport them. The inhabitants of *Antioch*, of *Athens*, of *Corinth*, or of any other of the places where the Apoſtles preached, never heard of the name of *Jeſus*, before the miracles appealed to excited them to believe. To ſuppoſe a confederacy, therefore, in this caſe, would be to ſuppoſe it, where there was an impoſſibility of having confederates.

If to the above reflections we add, that the ſame circumſtances attended the miracles of the Apoſtles among the *Gentiles*, which attended the miracles of *Jeſus*

among the *Jews;* that thoſe perſons to whom they were propoſed, were neither biaſſed by a previous diſpoſition of their own to admit them, nor reſtrained by any power lodged with the propoſers, from examining them; but that, on the contrary, the Apoſtles were as much oppoſed by the *Pagan* prieſts and magiſtrates, as their maſter had been by thoſe of the *Jews;* if, I ſay, we take all this into our conſideration, the concluſion will appear juſt, to every impartial inquirer, that the Apoſtolical miracles were neither ſcreened by any confederacy, nor owed their credit to want of examination.

Having then ſhewn that the miracles recorded in the New Teſtament are ſupported by a teſtimony ſo full, ſo free from every defect, and that the circumſtances under which they were publiſhed, aſſure us, ſo unqueſtionably, of their truth, I own myſelf not a little ſurprized, to ſee it aſſerted by the author of the *Eſſay on Miracles*—"That there is not to be found,

" in all hiſtory, any miracle atteſted by a " ſufficient number of men, of ſuch un- " queſtioned good ſenſe, education and " learning as to ſecure us againſt all delu- " ſion in themſelves; of ſuch undoubted " integrity as to place them beyond all " ſuſpicion of any deſign to deceive " others; of ſuch credit and reputation " in the eyes of mankind as to have a " great deal to loſe in caſe of being de- " tected in any falſehood; and at the ſame " time atteſting facts performed in ſuch a " public manner, and in ſo celebrated a " part of the world, as to render the de- " tection unavoidable: all which circum- " ſtances are requiſite to give us a full " aſſurance in the teſtimony of men *."

However confidently this be aſſerted, from what I have offered it ſeems plain, that in every circumſtance, really eſſential, the teſtimony for the miracles of the New Teſtament, has the qualifications

*Philoſophical Eſſays, p. 183.

which this gentleman requires. Can he ſay, that they are not atteſted by a ſufficient number of witneſſes? This cannot be affirmed with any juſtice; for we have ſeen, that, independently of the teſtimony of the Apoſtles themſelves, every perſon converted to Chriſtianity by its inſpired publiſhers, may be ſuppoſed to be a witneſs of miracles performed by them.—Will it be aſſerted then, that none of them had good ſenſe, learning and education enough to ſecure themſelves from deluſion? To give this character of the many thouſands, converts to Chriſtianity on the evidence of miracles, would be too wild an aſſertion. However; one would think that learning and education cannot be very neceſſary, to make men adequate judges of matters of fact preſented to their eyes; and that common ſenſe was all that could be requiſite in the witneſſes of the Goſpel miracles, to ſecure them from deluſion. But perhaps they may be ſuſpected of an intention to deceive others and wanted integrity.—What? Can thoſe

perſons be ſuſpected of wanting integrity, who, as we have ſeen, far from gaining any thing by their teſtimony, were involved by it in every hardſhip and diſtreſs?—Will he next ſay, that they were not of ſuch credit and reputation in the eyes of men as to have a great deal to loſe, in caſe of being detected in any falſehood? —To this I would anſwer, that the witneſſes of the New Teſtament miracles, though you repreſent them in as deſpicable a light as you pleaſe, with regard to credit and reputation in the eyes of the world, yet had a great deal to loſe:—They could ſuffer pain, they could ſmart under ſcourges, they could feel the reſtraints of impriſonment, they could bleed under the hands of the executioner. Surely they who had their lives to loſe, and actually loſt them, muſt be owned to loſe a great deal.—Or, laſtly, will this gentleman ſay, that the Goſpel miracles were not performed in ſo public a manner, and in ſo celebrated a part of the world as to render a detection unavoidable? If *he* can aſſert

this, or if *you*, after what I have collected on this point, ſhould concur in the aſſertion, I ſhall then ſit down and deſpair of convincing you :—I ſhall look upon you as being determined againſt conviction.

I ſhall only add, that as the teſtimony for the miracles of the New Teſtament has been proved to have all the circumſtances, which this great champion againſt the miracles, in general, thinks requiſite to give a full aſſurance in the teſtimony of man, I hope that I have ſufficiently eſtabliſhed their credibility; eſpecially as I attempted, and I hope not unſucceſsfully, in the beginning of this treatiſe, to anſwer that reaſoning of the ſame gentleman, which would make the miraculous nature of a fact, to be a demonſtration of its impoſſibility.

Though your patience has, by this time, been ſufficiently tried, yet as the importance of my ſubject requires, that nothing ſhould be omitted which may ſtrengthen

my argument, I muſt beg the continuance of your attention, while I go through the laſt head which I propoſed to treat of, and attempt to prove

That, beſides the unexceptionable proof from teſtimony, the credibility of the Goſpel miracles is confirmed to us, by collateral evidences of the moſt ſtriking nature, and which no ſpurious miracles can boaſt of.

The firſt circumſtance which I ſhall mention, as a collateral evidence of the reality of the Goſpel miracles, and as adding weight to the teſtimony by which they are ſupported—is the great change introduced into the ſtate of religion, by the firſt preachers of Chriſtianity.

Indeed, this point has been ſo frequently and ſo well handled, and extended ſo amply through all its branches, eſpecially in the noble diſcourſes of Biſhop *Atterbury*, and in the accurate performance of

Mr. *Weſt*, that it would be entirely unneceſſary to enlarge upon it here. It will ſuffice, therefore, to obſerve that unleſs we believe the firſt publiſhers of Chriſtianity to have been veſted with miraculous powers, thereby commanding attention and proving their divine miſſion, it would be impoſſible to aſſign any one cauſe adequate to the eſtabliſhment of the religion of *Jeſus*, on the ruins of *Pagan* ſuperſtition. Once diveſt them of the power of working miracles, which we aſcribe to them, and we ſhall not be able to comprehend how they could gain ſo much as one convert to their religion. Every difficulty and diſcouragement, that can be imagined, oppoſed the propagation of the Goſpel. Whether we conſider who its publiſhers were, men in the loweſt ſtations of life, without riches to bribe, authority to awe, reputation to influence, learning to confute, or eloquence to perſuade thoſe to whom they addreſſed themſelves; or, whether we conſider what they had to ſtruggle with, the power of the civil ma-

giſtrates, the influence of the prieſts of the eſtabliſhed religions, and the prejudices of every hearer—in any of theſe views, the eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity, unleſs we admit the reality of the miracles laid claim to, muſt be looked upon to have been morally impoſſible. Sooner could the inconſiderable number of Chriſtian preachers have conquered the *Roman* empire without arms, than extended their religion without miracles. Rob them of this weapon and we are confounded at the execution they did. But once ſuppoſe them thus fitted for the combat, and the victories which they gained will appear to be no more than what might naturally be expected. Then ſhall we comprehend, how Chriſtianity ſhould ſpread itſelf with ſuch rapidity; how men ſhould be ſo eager in embracing it, though they were ſure alſo of embracing miſery and perſecution; and how ſo many converts could be added to the Church, amidſt the groans of expiring martyrs.

But as I am ſenſible that I propoſe arguments to one, who will make them paſs ſtrictly in review before him, I cannot diſmiſs the preſent one, without obviating what you will, perhaps, object againſt its being concluſive.—It may be argued, then, in order to weaken this argument, drawn from the effect which the miracles of *Jeſus* and his Apoſtles had, that many who muſt have ſeen them were not convinced by them; that *Jeſus*, far from converting the bulk of the *Jews*, was put to death by them, and that the Apoſtles and firſt preachers of the Goſpel, to the *Gentiles*, met with the ſame fate.

In oppoſition to this objection, I beg leave to obſerve, that, if it has any weight at all, it will prove this—That the ſame evidence muſt appear with the ſame degree of ſtrength to every underſtanding; the impoſſibility of which reſults from the very frame of our nature. Education, prejudice, principles diverſely eſpouſed, different capacities, and different ways of

thinking, all theſe are ſo many cauſes which will, neceſſarily, make men to be differently affected with tranſactions to which they are witneſſes. Not that I would affirm that a man's particular biaſs of mind can ever ſo far influence him, as to make him diſtruſt his ſenſes, provided his ſenſes be under the government of his reaſon, and induce him to diſpute the reality of a fact which he himſelf ſaw. My meaning is, that a man's prejudices may induce him to reſiſt the conſequences which ariſe from this fact; may induce him, not to pay that regard to it which he ought, to put the worſt conſtruction on it, and to caſt about for ways of explaining it away. And, in this manner, it is eaſy to give the reaſons why ſo many *Jews* and *Gentiles* were not converted to Chriſtianity, though they were convinced of the reality of the miraculous facts aſcribed to *Jeſus* and his Apoſtles.

That both *Jews* and *Gentiles* could not

but be averſe, to admit the claim of the publiſhers of Chriſtianity to be Teachers from God, is a point which will not be diſputed by any one, who recollects that the declared end of this new religion, was to aboliſh the *Jewiſh* law on the one hand, and the *Pagan* ſuperſtition on the other. Prepoſſeſſed, therefore, againſt the doctrines which theſe miracles were deſigned to confirm, no wonder that many who were ſpectators of them, ſhould refuſe to admit them as proofs that the performers of them were Teachers from God, and have recourſe to the inexplicable operation of *magic*, or to the abſurd interpoſition of *Belzebub*, prince of the devils, to account for them. So that the rejection of the Goſpel miracles by ſo many *Jews* and *Gentiles*, ſpectators of them, cannot be urged as a proof that the miracles were falſe; it can only prove that many, through their prejudices aſcribed them to wrong cauſes.—Add to this, that an immoral practice, fear of temporal inconvenience, nay, even mere

want of attention, might operate as ſo many impediments to a converſion to Chriſtianity, on many who could not call in doubt the reality of the miracles appealed to.

The rejection of the Goſpel miracles, by *ſome*, does not, then, at all, invalidate the preſumption we have of their truth, drawn from the effect which we know they had upon *other* witneſſes of them. That, vaſt multitudes, both *Jews* and *Gentiles* ſhould be converted to Chriſtianity. cannot be accounted for, without ſuppoſing the truth of the miracles, and that *all* were not converted, could not but happen, whether we conſider the general frame of human nature, or attend to the particular impediments which I have pointed out.

I come, now, to conſider a ſecond collateral proof of the reality of the Goſpel miracles.

A power of working miracles, is only one ſpecies of divine aſſiſtance, and men may, in other inſtances, be under a *ſupernatural influence*. As, therefore, the ſuppoſed incredibility of a divine aſſiſtance, in general, is the chief reaſon, why the abſolute incredibility of this particular kind of divine aſſiſtance—the working of miracles, is aſſerted, I cannot take a more effectual way to ſatisfy you of the truth of the miracles aſcribed to the firſt publiſhers of Chriſtianity, than to ſhew that *God was with them*, in other inſtances.

And, firſt, that *Jeſus* and his Apoſtles were not without a divine influence with regard to what they taught; or, in other words, that they could not have been the authors of ſuch a religion, unleſs they had been inſtructed from above, will appear a very juſt concluſion from the following reflections.

Who, then, were the perſons who introduced the Chriſtian religion into the

world?—Men, whoſe country, whoſe education, whoſe ſtation in life, incapacitated them from poliſhing or improving any abilities, which they might have from nature, by the helps of learning, and ſcience. *Jeſus, the ſon of a carpenter*, and twelve, illiterate fiſhermen, publicans, and mechanics, do not promiſe great matters, when they take upon themſelves to commence teachers of religion, to treat of the abſtruſe points relating to a Deity and Providence, and of the important obligations of morality.

Great, therefore, muſt be our ſurprize, to find, upon looking into the books which contain their precepts and doctrines, ſuch a view given of God as approves itſelf to right reaſon, ſuch methods of worſhip preſcribed, and ſuch terms of acceptance propoſed, as are moſt worthy of God to require; ſuch a ſcheme of conduct in life enjoined towards thoſe connected with us, as is moſt uſeful to the public, and conducive to our own private felicity; and

ſuch motives to obedience urged, as are moſt effectual to operate on men of every temper:—In a word; to ſee their writings filled, with the moſt noble reflections, and with ſentiments that do honour to human nature *.

* Here it may be objected, "that I have given a partial "view of the religion taught in the New Teſtament, part of "which, it may be ſaid, far from being agreeable to right "reaſon, is myſterious and incomprehenſible, by us."—The truth of this is acknowledged; but it does not, in the leaſt, affect my argument.—If we met with a book the greateſt part of which was in a language we underſtood, while ſome few pages of it were in an unknown tongue, on a ſuppoſition that the bulk of the book which we underſtand, contained nothing but what is reaſonable, we ſhould have ſufficient grounds for *believing* that the ſame vein of good ſenſe run through thoſe places which we do not underſtand, as the ſame hand was the author of both.—This is extremely applicable to the Chriſtian religion. It is a ſcheme imperfectly underſtood: what we underſtand of it, which is by far the greater part, is wiſe, reaſonable, and beneficial. If, then, what we do not comprehend, come (as it certainly does) from the ſame perſons who taught the reſt, we have ſufficient grounds for *believing* that the whole ſcheme, even in thoſe parts of it which are incomprehenſible by us, is agreeable to right reaſon. For a doctrine may be *above* reaſon, without being *contrary* to it; and what is incomprehenſible by men, may, to more exalted underſtandings, be

Should it be ſaid, that all theſe are points diſcoverable by human reaſon, and conſequently that the publiſhers of Chriſtianity might have taught them, without being ſupernaturally inſtructed; I would deſire you to reflect, that we can have no other rule of judging what is diſcoverable by human reaſon, but by obſerving what diſcoveries human reaſon has actually made; and what the unaſſiſted faculties of man have ever been able to do, in

plain and intelligible. And as there are ſome ſuch doctrines contained in the New Teſtament, ſo can we give a very ſatisfactory account why they are there. For the Chriſtian revelation does not enlarge the faculties of the human mind, it only propoſes truths which were unknown before. Now as many truths relating to the infinite Creator and Governor of the Univerſe muſt, neceſſarily, ſeem paradoxes to our limited underſtandings, it is not, at all, ſurprizing, that there ſhould be myſteries in Chriſtianity not to be fathomed by our reaſon. Such points could not but be mentioned, in a divine revelation preſcribing a rule of faith: but till our faculties be enlarged in a future ſtate, it will be impoſſible for us to have any adequate notions of them. If they be revealed, this is enough to ſatisfy us that they are true: as to the manner of their being true, nothing being revealed, nothing can be known.

planning a ſyſtem of religion, and rule of life.

And here I will not urge the extravagancies of uncultivated reaſon, the errors of ignorance, and the abſurdities of ſuperſtition, in the dark corners of the earth, but, to give the argument its full force, would deſire you to conſider how little, men of the moſt exalted genius, in the moſt enlightened ages of the *Pagan* world, could ever do; how imperfect, not to ſay irrational, their notions of the divine nature; how faulty and immoral, their opinions of human duty; and how wild and indigeſted, their ideas of the inviſible world.

If then a *Socrates*, a *Plato*, an *Ariſtotle*, and a *Tully*, failed in their attempts to lay down a perfect and conſiſtent ſcheme of religion and morality, how can we account for the ſuperiority ſo viſible in the writings of the authors of the New Teſtament? Nothing is left for us, but either

to affirm, that the illiterate publiſhers of Chriſtianity were better qualified to ſet up for teachers of mankind, than the philoſophers of *Greece* or *Rome*, who had learnt from inſtruction and ſcience, all that great abilities could learn; or, if this be too abſurd (as it indiſputably is) we muſt allow, that they could not have taught ſo perfect a ſcheme of religion and morality as they did, had not the darkneſs of their natural faculties been removed, by the inſpiration and influence of the Divine Being.

I know not, well, what can be offered to invalidate this argument, unleſs it be objected, that many of the moſt important articles of belief and practice, which we receive on the authority of the Goſpel revelation, have been *demonſtrated* and *delineated* on principles of mere reaſon. But with regard to this, I would beg leave to obſerve, that there is a wide difference between proving a doctrine to be agreeable to reaſon, after its certainty is once

known; and diſcovering its agreeableneſs to reaſon, before we have any notion of its certainty. Though every one is not capable of diſcovering a propoſition in geometry, every one will readily aſſent to it, after it is demonſtrated. In like manner, though human reaſon may not be capable of diſcovering the great truths revealed in the Goſpel, yet theſe truths may be ſo agreeable to, and ſo well connected with other truths which are obvious to reaſon, that, whenever they are propoſed to us, we may be enabled to diſcover this connection, which would, otherwiſe, have eſcaped us. And this is, in fact, the caſe: thoſe learned men who, ſince the appearance of Chriſtianity, have deduced all the great principles of *natural religion* from reaſon, knew, previouſly, from revelation, the certainty of the doctrines which they treated of; and a *Cumberland*, a *Clarke*, or a *Wollaſton*, would ſcarcely have ſucceeded better than *Plato*, or *Cicero* had done before, if they had not borrowed

lights from that revelation, which they were ſo happy as to be acquainted with.

As, therefore, there is the greateſt reaſon for believing, that *Jeſus* and his Apoſtles were ſupernaturally aſſiſted, ſo far as relates to the rule of duty, and ſyſtem of religion which they taught—why ſhould it be thought incredible, that they ſhould be ſupernaturally aſſiſted, in another reſpect, and enabled to work miracles? If there was a divine interpoſition in the former caſe, there cannot be the leaſt reaſon for withholding our belief that there was *one* in the latter, ſince we have all the evidence for the fact, that the nature of it can admit of—unexceptionable teſtimony.

But, leſt the above argument, drawn from the perfection of the religion taught by *Jeſus*, ſhould not be thought concluſive, ſuffer me to add another, which, in a manner, demonſtrates the certainty of

his acting under a ſupernatural influence.

I have here, in my view, his prophecies recorded in the Goſpels. There we may obſerve, his foretelling, that he was to be betrayed by *Judas;* and denied thrice by *Peter;* that he was to ſuffer by a violent death, and to be reſtored to life on the third day; and that his Apoſtles were to meet with the moſt cruel perſecution, and to loſe their lives on account of the religion which he appointed them to publiſh to the world. Beſides theſe, and others which might be mentioned, we have a moſt remarkable prediction, of what was to happen to *Jeruſalem* and the *Jewiſh* nation, related very circumſtantially, by three of the Evangeliſts, *Matth.* ch. 24. *Mark*, ch. 13. *Luke*, ch. 21. It conſiſts of many different parts, each of which may be conſidered as a diſtinct prophecy. Many very extraordinary occurrences, nay prodigies, that were to precede the principal event foretold, are

particularly enumerated; the remarkable circumſtances attending the ſiege of *Jeruſalem;* the extremities to which the beſieged were to be reduced; the uncommon ſeverity of the beſiegers, who were to ruin the city, and not to leave one ſtone upon another of the temple; and the ſingular fate of the *Jews* who were to be led captives into every nation; all theſe particulars are clearly mentioned by *Jeſus*, and hiſtory furniſhes the moſt ſatisfactory proofs that they have been completely verified *. He, therefore, who can ſup-

* The reader who would ſee, how remarkably this prediction agrees with the events related by the hiſtorians, will receive full ſatisfaction from a peruſal of Archbiſhop Tillotſon's ſermons on the ſubject, where he will obſerve the ſeveral particulars predicted of the deſtruction of Jeruſalem and the forerunning events connected with it, corroborated by the expreſs teſtimonies of Dion Caſſius, Tacitus, Joſephus, and other hiſtorians.—See, alſo, Biſhop Pearſe's Analaſis of the Prophecy, in Dr. Jortin's Remarks on Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory.—We need not refer to the teſtimony of hiſtory, to know whether the Jews have been led captives into all nations as our Saviour foretold; for the preſent ſituation of that reprobated nation is as well known, as it is wonderful and whoever would ſee the argument which

poſe that ſo many diſtant, connected events, could be foreſeen without the gift of prophecy, muſt, to be conſiſtent with himſelf, allow it to be poſſible, that the fortuitous daſhes of a pencil could produce a number of regular figures in an hiſtorical picture *.

may be drawn from it, in confirmation of Chriſtianity, placed in the ſtrongeſt light, will read, with pleaſure, the French author of the Principes de la Foi Chretienne, as quoted by Mr. Weſt, p. 395—409. The learned, (though almoſt forgotten) Dr. Jackſon's collections, relating to the ſtate of the Jews compared with the prophecies concerning them, alſo, greatly deſerve to be conſulted.

* Some figurative particulars mentioned in this prediction have given riſe to an opinion, that a prediction of the deſtruction of the world, is interwoven with that of the deſtruction of Jeruſalem. But the favourers of ſuch an opinion would do well to conſider, how they can reconcile it, to the plain declaration of our Saviour, who adds, Verily I ſay unto you, this generation ſhall not paſs away, till *all* theſe things be fulfilled. Accordingly, Dr. Hammond explains theſe figurative particulars in ſuch a manner, as ſhews that they had a real completion at the deſtruction of Jeruſalem: and if the reader will turn to Sir Iſaac Newton's chapter, on the Prophetic Language of Scripture, in his obſervations on Daniel, he will be ſatisfied that ſuch an interpretation of them is far from being forced and unnatural.—

Since then, we can be at a certainty, that *Jeſus* was ſupernaturally aſſiſted in this inſtance, of foretelling future contingencies, why ſhould we refuſe to believe, upon unexceptionable teſtimony, that he was ſupernaturally aſſiſted in another inſtance—that of working of miracles?—I need ſcarcely add, that this collateral evidence is peculiar to the Scripture miracles, for that any of the pretended wonder-workers, whoſe exploits have been ſo much boaſted of, were veſted with the gift of prophecy, cannot be affirmed.

However; if any one ſhould be of opinion, that the deſtruction of Jeruſalem is predicted in ſuch terms as are typical of the deſtruction of the world, I ſhall not be averſe to ſubſcribe to it; and ſhall only obſerve, that Chriſt's coming to take vengeance on the Jews, and his coming to judge the world, ſeem to have been thought by the primitive Chriſtians, as one and the ſame event; a plain proof this of the genuineneſs of the prediction in queſtion, which muſt have been in their hands before Jeruſalem was deſtroyed, otherwiſe they could never have entertained an opinion, which thoſe who lived after that event muſt have ſeen to be groundleſs.

I come now, to a third collateral proof of the genuineneſs of the miracles admitted by the Proteſtant Chriſtian. And as this ſhall be my laſt argument, ſo do I think it a moſt important one.

Whether we confine ourſelves to the miracles of the New Teſtament, or extend our conſideration to thoſe of the Old (which we equally admit) we ſhall, conſtantly, and without any exception, find, that *all* thoſe perſons who are, *there*, ſaid to have performed miracles, aſſumed the character of Prophets, or Teachers ſent from God, and that their miracles were intended as credentials, to eſtabliſh their claim, to add authority to the meſſages which they delivered, and to the law which they taught. This is not more remarkably true of *Jeſus* and his Diſciples, than it is of *Moſes* and his ſucceſſors the *Jewiſh* prophets: and, after uſing the beſt means of information, I think myſelf warranted to believe it to be equally *true*, that none of thoſe perſons amongſt the *Papiſts*,

to whom miracles have been aſcribed, even laid claim to ſuch a divine miſſion as that by which the workers of the Scripture miracles are diſtinguiſhed: and that their not having laid claim to this character of Teachers from Heaven, will greatly ſtrengthen the objections I have urged againſt the credibility of the miracles reported to have been wrought by them, will, perhaps, appear to be a fair concluſion, if we attend to the following obſervations *.

The laws eſtabliſhed in the univerſe, or, in other words, the courſe of nature; may be altered either by God's *inviſible agency*, or by the *viſible agency* of men made uſe of as his inſtruments, and veſted with powers for this purpoſe. Now, though we may

* It may not be improper to obſerve here, that though the grand impoſtor, who founded the Mahometan religion, aſſumed the character of a Prophet or Teacher ſent from God, yet it is well known that he expreſsly diſclaimed all power of working miracles. See his Life by Dr. Prideaux, p. 25—26.

be certain that God will never reverſe the courſe of nature, but for important ends (the courſe of nature being the plan of government laid down by himſelf) infinite wiſdom may ſee ends highly worthy of a miraculous interpoſition, the importance of which may lie hid from our ſhallow comprehenſion. Were, therefore, the miracles, about the credibility of which we now diſpute, events brought about by *inviſible agency*, though our being able to diſcover an important end ſerved by a miracle, would be no weak, additional motive to our believing it, our not being able to diſcover any ſuch end, could be no motive to induce us to reject it, if the teſtimony produced to confirm it be unexceptionable.

But the miracles about which we are, principally, concerned, are miracles aſcribed to the *viſible agency* of men; with regard to which the caſe is widely different. For if, in a matter of this kind, human reaſon can arrive at any certainty,

there ſeems ſufficient foundation for aſſerting, that God never will veſt men with a power of working miracles, unleſs ſuch power be veſted in them, for this *one end*, to ſatisfy the world that they are really under a ſupernatural influence, and are to be looked upon as Teachers from Heaven. That this *end* is of the higheſt importance, our reaſon enables us to diſcover, and I have already obſerved to you * that miracles are the beſt credentials, to gain reception to any thing publiſhed in the name of the Supreme Being. But every *other end* that God can propoſe to ſerve by miracles, it ſhould ſeem may be effected without having recourſe to the inſtrumentality of *human agents*. Whether his moral government be to be vindicated, his ſupremacy to be aſſerted, calamities to be inflicted upon or, happineſs communicated to ſocieties or individuals; or if, beſides theſe, miraculous interpoſitions be requiſite for *any other* providential end,

* See above, p. 41—44.

all this may be effected by God's *invisible agency*, without calling in the visible agency of men, and vesting them with power to perform the events.

Now we cannot suppose, that God would make use of men as his instruments in reversing the laws of nature, when the ends of his miraculous interposition could be effected by his own immediate operation. For the same arguments by which we are enabled to discover the wisdom of the Deity, lead us to this conclusion, that, in his operations, he will always act in the most simple, and regular way, without making use of unnecessary, superfluous means.

This consideration places the Scripture miracles, and, particularly, those of *Jesus* and his Apostles, on a peculiar footing of credibility. They were performed for the express purpose of confirming the truth of a character which the workers of them assumed, that of being revealers of the will

of God. This is a circumſtance that muſt add greatly to the weight of the teſtimony ſupporting them; if, as I hope, I have aſſigned ſubſtantial reaſons for believing that the only end of enabling men to work miracles is to prove their divine miſſion, and that of all thoſe, to whom ſuch ſupernatural power has been aſcribed, none ever aſſumed the character of Teachers from the *true* God—except thoſe perſons, whoſe miracles are related in the Scriptures. I ſay the *true* God, any claim of a *Pagan* wonder-worker to a miſſion, from the *falſe* objects of adoration, being only a freſh inſtance of impoſture.

But, perhaps, it will be alleged, that the miracles aſcribed to the agency of the *Romiſh* ſaints have this qualification, and were performed for the very ſame purpoſes that were propoſed by the miracles of *Jeſus* and his Apoſtles—the confirmation of doctrines looked upon to be eſſential to Chriſtianity.

Nothing can be farther from the truth than this aſſertion. *Jeſus* and his Apoſtles, we are certain, aſſumed the character of divine Teachers, and expreſsly declared, that their *works* were credentials of the character aſſumed. But ſo far is this from being the caſe of any of the *Romiſh* ſaints, that I think I may ſafely challenge their admirers, to produce any writings of any of them, in which a power of working miracles is claimed, much leſs can they inſtance any one of them, who pretended ever to have received any doctrines from Heaven, which he might confirm by miracles. The *Romiſh* church derives, as we do, all its doctrines from the inſpired publiſhers of Chriſtianity, and aſſerts that they have been handed down to them, either authorized by the Scriptures, or warranted by tradition. None of the pretences to miracles, therefore, amongſt them, can be otherwiſe urged as proofs of their doctrines, than as they are aſcribed to perſons, who were believers of theſe

doctrines, ſuppoſed to have been already revealed.

But ſtill it may be urged, that, though the *Romiſh* miracle-workers have never aſſumed the character of divine Teachers, it was highly expedient they ſhould be veſted with ſuch a power, in order to prove the truth of their interpretations of the Scriptures, in oppoſition to Proteſtants and other heretics. Neither will this pretence ſerve their cauſe. For we defy them to produce an inſtance of a ſaint, who ever declared that he was veſted with a miraculous power, for ſuch an end.—Beſides; moſt of their famous wonder-workers lived before the reformation, when, as yet, no body diſputed their interpretations of the Scriptures, or the authenticity of their traditions. And thoſe few who have had the honour of miracles attributed to them ſince the reformation (for inſtances of miracle-working ſeem, ſince that famous period, to diminiſh,

among *Papiſts*, in proportion as inſtances of witchcraft have diminiſhed amongſt *us*) have not performed their miracles under ſuch circumſtances, as could be of ſervice in converting of heretics. The ſcenes of them have been always amongſt themſelves; and none have ever had it in their power to examine into the evidences of them, but thoſe very perſons whom we have reaſon either to charge with credulity, or to ſuſpect of fraud. If Heaven, therefore, had veſted the *Romiſh* ſaints with miraculous powers, to prove the doctrines of *their* church to be genuine, we may be certain that they would have been directed to exerciſe theſe powers, at places where theſe doctrines were not believed, and in preſence of thoſe whom it was intended to convert to the faith.—Let, then, the *Papiſts* abſtain (if they have any modeſty) from boaſting of the truth of their church from the glory of miracles, till they can ſend, into an heretical country, miſſionaries veſted with ſuch a power, and aſſerting to themſelves the character

of embaſſadors from God, to confirm *Popery*.

I ſhall only add, that as it is an indiſputable fact, that the *Romiſh* miſſionaries, preaching in the *Indies*, do not pretend to be veſted with a power of working miracles to confirm Chriſtianity to *Pagans*, this one conſideration is enough to ſatisfy any reaſonable man, that none of the heroes of the *breviary*, were veſted with ſuch a power, to confirm *Popery* to *Papiſts*.

Though I have, now, extended this treatiſe to a much greater length than I propoſed at firſt, I cannot conclude, without making ſome obſervations upon the late controverſy about the miracles of the primitive ages of the church, maintained on the one hand by Dr. *Middleton*, and on the other, by an almoſt endleſs number of his brethren the clergy; a controverſy which, though carried on by perſons profeſſing Chriſtianity, has, nevertheleſs,

greatly intereſted the enemies of Chriſtianity, by the manner in which it has been conducted; and as it has furniſhed you, in particular, with many of the objections which I have attempted to anſwer, I could not paſs it over un-remarked upon, without leaving my ſubject unfiniſhed.

In order then to form a true judgment of this diſpute, it will be neceſſary to call to mind the diſtinction lately mentioned by me, that miracles are of two ſorts, either events brought about by God's immediate, inviſible interpoſition, or works performed by the agency of men made uſe of as his inſtruments; and to apply this to the queſtion before us.

Now it is to be obſerved, that the controverſy does not at all relate to miracles of inviſible agency. Had Dr. *Middleton* maintained, that there have been no ſuch interpoſitions of Providence ſince the publication of the Goſpel, he could have been eaſily refuted. For, ſome ſuch in-

terpoſitions may be clearly traced in the early ages of the church, ſo ſtrongly atteſted as to leave us no room for doubting of their having happened.—In particular, he who can ſuppoſe that the vaſt multitudes of Chriſtian martyrs during the perſecutions of the three firſt centuries *,

* The perſecution under the Emperor Decius about the year 250, deſcribed as follows by Dr. Cave, will give the reader a juſt idea of the reſt.—" Perſecuting the Chriſtians " was the debate of all public councils, and the great care " of the magiſtrates, which did not vent itſelf in a few " threatenings and hard words, but in ſtudying methods of " cruelty, and inſtruments of torments, the very apprehen- " ſion whereof is dreadful and amazing to human nature: " ſwords and axes, fire, wild beaſts, ſnakes, and engines to " ſtretch and diſtend the limbs; iron chains made red hot, " frames of timber ſet up ſtraight, in which the bodies of the " tormented, as they ſtood, were raked with nails that tore " off the fleſh; and innumerable other arts daily invented, " every great man being careful that another ſhould not " ſeem to be more fierce and cruel than himſelf. Some " came as informers, others as witneſſes: ſome ſearched all " private corners, others ſeized upon them that fled, and " ſome who gaped for their neighbour's eſtates, took hold of " the opportunity to accuſe and perſecute them for being " Chriſtians. So that there was a general confuſion and con- " ſternation, every man being afraid of his neareſt relatives, " the father not conſulting the ſafety of his child, nor the

whoſe firmneſs and intrepidity amazed, nay even wearied out their inhuman perſecutors, and whoſe behaviour under all the variety of ſufferings and torments, on account of their religion, was ſo ſuperior to the utmoſt efforts of human nature in the uſual courſe of things; he, I ſay, who can ſuppoſe, that this venerable hoſt of

" child regarding its duty to its parents; the Gentile ſon " betraying his Chriſtian father, and the Infidel father ac- " cuſing his ſon for embracing Chriſtianity; and the bro- " ther accounting it a piece of piety to violate the laws of " nature in the cauſe of religion, and to condemn his own " brother becauſe a Chriſtian. By this means the woods " became full, and the cities empty; and yet no ſooner " were many houſes rid of their proper owners, but they " were turned into common gaols, the public priſons not " being able to contain the multitudes of Chriſtians that " were ſent to them. You could not go into the markets, " or places of uſual concourſe, but you might have ſeen " ſome apprehended, others led to trial or execution; ſome " weeping, others laughing and rejoicing at the common " miſery: no regard had to age, or ſex, or virtue, or merit; " but as in a city ſtormed by a proud and potent conquer- " or, every thing was, without mercy, expoſed to the " rage and rudeneſs of a barbarous and inhuman enemy."

Cave's Lives of the Fathers, p. 194.

holy confeſſors, could have braved death with a fortitude ſo uncommon, if God had not, by his inviſible agency, interpoſed to comfort and ſtrengthen their minds under ſuch diſtreſs, will believe a miracle greater than any of thoſe to which we Chriſtians appeal. But ſuch *perſonal* aſſiſtances, however certain the perſons, to whom they were granted, might be of their reality, are of a nature incapable of being ſupported by teſtimony, and conſequently, properly ſpeaking, not miraculous; to us at leaſt, it cannot be made to appear ſo.—There are, however, other inſtances of interpoſitions of Heaven, by inviſible agency, capable of being proved by teſtimony, to be met with in the writers of the primitive ages, which ſeem to have all the marks of truth that teſtimony can give to matters of fact. And, not to mention any others, that *Julian*'s attempt to rebuild the temple of *Jeruſalem* was defeated, by a ſignal interpoſition of Providence, appears to be highly credible, when we recollect our Saviour's prophecy, that *not*

one ſtone ſhould be left upon another, of that edifice *.

But it was not Dr. *Middleton*'s deſign, to enquire into the incredibility or credibility of ſuch miracles as theſe. And his *Free Inquiry* is not, whether any miracles were performed after the times of the Apoſtles, but whether, after that period, miraculous powers ſubſiſted in the church; not whether God interpoſed at all, but whether he interpoſed, by making uſe of men as his inſtruments †.

* See Biſhop Warburton's Julian, a book written with a ſolidity of argument, which might always have been expected from him, and with a ſpirit of candour, which his enemies thought him incapable of till now.

† Dr. Middleton's opinion is beſt expreſſed in his own words. "The poſition which I affirm, is; that after the "days of the Apoſtles, no ſtanding power of working miracles was continued to the church, to which they might "perpetually appeal, for the conviction of unbelievers. "This is what the title of my work implies; what my "whole reaſoning turns upon, and what I have often ſignified in the courſe of it to be my meaning. Yet all my "antagoniſts treat my argument, as if it abſolutely rejected

The deciſion of the queſtion, thus ſtated, whether we hold the negative with Dr. *Middleton*, or the affirmative with Drs. *Dodwell* and *Church*, is a matter of the utmoſt indifference to the cauſe of Chriſtianity. Our faith is not built on the foundation of the fathers, but on that of *Jeſus* and his Apoſtles. And, therefore, though the miraculous powers, mentioned by the former to have ſubſiſted in their age, ſhould be doubted of, nay given up, no ſincere Chriſtian need be alarmed at ſuch a conceſſion, if, at the ſame time, it be ſhewn, that the reaſons for making it, will not, in the leaſt, affect the miracles recorded in the New Teſtament, and that

" every thing of a miraculous kind, whether wrought within " the church by the agency of men, or on any other occa- " ſion by the immediate hand of God. That God can " work miracles whenever he pleaſes, no body, I dare ſay, " will deny: but whether he has wrought any or not, ſince " the days of the Apoſtles, is an inquiry which I do not at " all enter into: the ſingle point, which I maintain, is, that " the church had no ſtanding power of working any."

Vindication of the Free Inquiry, p. 32—33.

whatever becomes of other pretenſions, theſe will remain unſhaken.

One of Dr. *Middleton*'s antagoniſts has indeed aſſerted—" That if all miracles " after the days of the Apoſtles, atteſted " unanimouſly by the primitive fathers, " are no better than enthuſiaſm, cheat and " impoſture, then we are deprived of our " evidence for the truth of the Goſpel " miracles, and Chriſtianity may be called " in queſtion *."—Could this aſſertion be well ſupported, I own that far from its being a matter of indifference whether we believe or reject the miracles of the fathers, thoſe of the Goſpel muſt ſtand or fall with them.—But I am confident, that every one who has examined the queſtion before us, with any accuracy, will be of a very different opinion, and will find reaſon to ſubſcribe to that of a writer well-known in our church, *that the miracles of the fathers may be rejected without any miſ-*

* Preface to Jackſon's Remarks on the Free Inquiry.

*chief, and yet the miracles of the Apoſtles and of their maſter, may be maintained as true and certain**.

But the judgment of one who never profeſſed himſelf an advocate for the miracles of the fathers, is leſs to our preſent purpoſe than the judgment of their expreſs champions.—Dr. *Berriman* who can digeſt the wild, ridiculous miracles of the fourth and fifth centuries, thoſe ages of credulity and ſuperſtition, ſays, "that "theſe cannot be diſcredited without re-"jecting all accounts of miracles except "thoſe of the Scriptures †:" by which exception he expreſsly allows that the Scripture miracles ſtand upon a ſurer footing of credibility, and would remain unſhaken, though all the reſt were diſcredited.—Another learned divine, the firſt who entered the liſts againſt Dr. *Middle-*

* Two queſtions previous to Dr. Middleton's Free Inquiry, p. 94.

† Sermons at Lady Moyer's Lectures, p. 327.

ſon by anſwering his Introductory Diſcourſe, concurs in the ſame opinion, when he tells us, that "if not ſo much as one "true miracle could be found after the "days of the Apoſtles, the foundations "of Chriſtianity would be equally ſe-"cure*"

Though I cannot recollect any ſuch explicit declaration of Dr. *Dodwell*, yet I find Dr. *Church* telling us "that the mira-"cles recorded in the Holy Scriptures "muſt be owned to be a ſufficient founda-"tion of the Chriſtian faith, though we "had no accounts at all of any ſubſequent "ones, or none which we could vindicate "and approve†."—Nay, farther, which is extremely remarkable, he obſerves, "that the Scripture miracles are related "more circumſtantially than moſt of thoſe "of the primitive church. We are told

* Obſervations on Dr. Middleton's Introductory Diſcourſe, p. 30. ſuppoſed to be written by Dr. Stobbing.

† Vindication of the miraculous powers, &c. p. 15.

" not only that they were wrought, but " *where*, on *whom*, and before *whom* they " were wrought. And this I own and " willingly allow, to be a conſiderable ad- " vantage, and ſuch as gives them a ſu- " periority and pre-eminence above all " others. Yet ſtill, will our want of " knowing the names of the perſons, " who received benefit from miracles, and " the circumſtances of place, company, " *&c.* deſtroy their credit?—No ſurely. " There are different degrees of probabi- " lity. The accounts of the ancient fa- " thers may be and are ſufficiently ſatis- " factory, and worthy of our belief, though " they do not carry with them the ſelf- " ſame very clear and convincing proofs " of their truth, which the relations of " the Evangeliſts do*."

' From all theſe quotations then, you ſee that it is a point about which Chriſtians (even thoſe who are the moſt ſanguine

* Ditto, p. 87.

oppoſers of Dr. *Middleton*'s opinion) are pretty well agreed, that the miracles of the fathers *do not carry with them the ſame very clear and convincing proofs of their truth, which the relations of the Evangeliſts do.* So that, I again repeat it, even upon the principles of theſe gentlemen themſelves, all that Dr. *Middleton* contends for may be admitted, and yet the credibility of the miracles recorded in the New Teſtament, will remain unſhaken.

Whether the ſame arguments which led Dr. *Berriman*, the author of the obſervations, and Dr. *Church*, to allow that the miracles recorded by the fathers, do not ſtand upon the ſame footing of credibility with thoſe of the Evangeliſts, ought not alſo to have led them to reject them altogether, is a conſideration I ſhall not meddle with. But thus much I cannot help obſerving, in order to be conſiſtent with myſelf, and with the principles I have laid down in this treatiſe, that the miraculous powers mentioned by the

writers of the ſecond and third centuries, are apparently liable to ſome of the objections, which I have urged as grounds for our diſbelieving the ſpurious pretenſions of *Popery;* and that moſt, if not all, theſe objections, are applicable, in their full force, to the miracles of the fourth and fifth age. To be particular upon this head, would lead me to a repetition of what has been ſo copiouſly inſiſted upon, by Dr. *Middleton* and his anſwerers. Suffer me, therefore, juſt to obſerve, that though our not knowing on *whom*, or by *whom*, or before *whom*, the miracles recorded by the fathers of the ſecond and third centuries were wrought, ſhould be allowed not *to deſtroy their credit* (though this is a conceſſion very few will make to Dr. *Church*) yet the facts appealed to are of ſo ambiguous a kind, that granting they did happen, it will remain to be decided, by a conſideration of the circumſtances attending the performance of them, whether there was any miracle in the caſe, or no. For, if we except the teſtimonies

of *Papias* and *Irenæús*, who ſpeak of the raiſing the dead, (and what I ſhall ſuggeſt in the note will ſerve to prove that their teſtimony is foreign to the preſent queſtion.*) I can find no inſtances of mira-

* The point in diſpute is, whether miraculous powers were continued in the church after the Apoſtles. Papias is quoted as ſaying that a dead perſon had been raiſed in his age. But what can this prove, when it is a known fact that Papias was cotemporary with, if not a diſciple of ſome of the Apoſtles, and conſequently lived at a time when both parties are agreed miraculous powers did ſubſiſt? The teſtimony of Papias will appear ſtill more foreign to the debate, by quoting the paſſage of Euſebius where it is mentioned το μεν ουν κατα την Ἱεραπολιν Φλιππου του αποστολου αμα ταις θυγατρασι διατριψαι, δια των προσθεν δεδηλωται. ὡς κατα τους αυτους ὁ Παπιας γενομενος διηγησιν παρειληφεναι θαυμασιαν ὑπο του Φιλιππου θυγατερων μνημονευει, ταυην σημειωτεον νεκρου γαρ αναστασιν κατ' αυτον γεγονυιαν ἱστορει——και αλλα δε ὁ αυτος συγγραφευς ως εκ παραδοσεως αγραφου εις αυτον ἡκοντα παρατεθειται.

Euſeb. L. III. C. 39.

"That Philip the Apoſtle and his daughters lived at "Hierapolis hath been mentioned already. As Papias, "who was their cotemporary, relates a wonderful hiſtory "as told to him by the daughter of Philip, I ſhall take "notice of it here. For he tells us of one's being raiſed "from the dead, at that time——and the ſame author

cles mentioned by the fathers before the fourth century, as what were performed

" has related other things alſo, as being handed down to " him by unwritten tradition." It is obvious then from this paſſage of Euſebius, of which I think I have given a faithful tranſlation, that Papias does not mention this inſtance of a perſon's being raiſed from the dead on his own knowledge, but as a fact, the tradition of which had been handed down to him by the daughters of Philip, whom he was perſonally acquainted with, as they lived at Hierapolis, of which he was Biſhop. Now theſe daughters of Philip are mentioned in the 21ſt Chapter of the Acts of the Apoſtles. We may well ſuppoſe, then, that they were eye-witneſſes of miracles performed by their father and the other Apoſtles; and conſequently, the inſtance related by them to Papias, of one being raiſed from the dead, muſt be allowed to be a miracle of the Apoſtolic age, and foreign to the preſent debate. But if the teſtimony of Papias be foreign, what ſhall we ſay to that of Irenæus? Dr. Middleton, repreſents this father as telling us that the dead were frequently raiſed, in his time, that is, in the ſecond century, and lived for many years after; and this teſtimony the Doctor thinks he has ſufficiently invalidated, by giving us inſtances of credulity, &c. in the character of Irenæus, and by ſhewing, from his cotemporary Theophilus of Antioch, that the Chriſtians of that time, were not able to produce to their Pagan adverſaries, any one perſon who had been raiſed from the dead.

Now, in my judgment, the Doctor might have well

by Chriſtians in their times, but the cures of diſeaſes, particularly the cures of dæ-

avoided the invidious taſk of depreciating Irenæus's teſtimony. For though both he and the gentlemen who have anſwered the Free Inquiry, have taken it for granted that Irenæus ſpeaks of the power of raiſing the dead as ſubſiſting ſtill in his own time, this point, about which both are agreed, will not appear ſo evident if we examine the paſſage in which Irenæus is ſuppoſed to give this teſtimony. As our copies of Irenæus want the original Greek here, I ſhall give it as preſerved by Euſebius, L. 5. C. vii. P. 127. —τοσουτον δε αποδεουσι του νεκρον εγειραι καθως ὁ κυριος ηγειρε και οι αποστολοι δια προσευχης, και εν τη αδελφοτητι πολλοι πολλακις δε δια το αναγκαιον, και της κατα τοπον εκκλησιας πασης αιτησαμενης μετα νηστειας πολλης, και λιτανειας, επεστρεψε το πνευμα του τετελευκοτος, και εχαρισθη ὁ ανθρωπος ταις ευχαις των αγιων. "They "indeed (the heretics) are far from being able to raiſe the "dead, as our Lord raiſed them, and as the Apoſtles and "many of the brethren raiſed them by their prayers. But "frequently, upon ſome neceſſary occaſion, by the prayers "of the whole church of the place, offered up with much "faſting, has the ſpirit returned to the dead body, and "a man been given back to the prayers of the Saints."— The drift of Irenæus's argument is to confute an opinion of ſome heretics, who affirmed that Jeſus did not truly riſe from the dead but only φαντασιωδως, in appearance, an opinion founded on the ſuppoſed impoſſibility of a reſurrection, and which Irenæus ſhews to be groundleſs by appealing to facts, to inſtances of perſons who had been raiſed from the dead by Jeſus himſelf, by the Apoſtles, by other brethren,

moniacs, by exorcising them, which laſt indeed ſeems to be their favorite *ſtanding*

and by the united prayers of ſome churches. But I appeal to every one whether he has given the leaſt hint that any ſuch miracle was frequently performed in his own days. He aſſerts that ſuch miracles *had* happened in the church, but ſays not a word of their continuing *ſtill* to happen; and therefore he may well be ſuppoſed to allude to what had happened in the Apoſtolic age, when all Chriſtians are agreed, that miraculous powers ſtill ſubſiſted.

But let us attend to what follows next, as quoted from Irenæus by Euſebius, in the ſame place, and we ſhall ſee farther grounds for concluding, that raiſing the dead is not one of the miraculous powers, ſaid by him to be exerciſed by Chriſtians in his time, εν τω εκεινου ονοματι οι αληθως αυτου μαθηται, παρ' αυτου λαβοντες την χαριν, επιτελουσιν, εφ' ευεργεσια των λοιπων ανθρωπων—οι μεν γαρ δαιμονας ελαυνουσι—οι δε προγνωσιν εχουσι των μελλοντων, και οπτασιας, και ρησεις προφητικας. αλλοι δε τους καμνοντας δια της των χειρων επιθεσεως ιωνται—ηδη δε καθως εφαμεν, και νεκροι ηγερθησαν, και παρεμειναν συν ημιν ικανοις ετεσι. "They who are his (Jeſus's) true diſciples do in "his name, confer bleſſings on others by a power received "from him—for ſome *caſt* out Dæmons,—others *have* know-"lege of futurity, and *ſee* viſions, others again *cure* the "ſick by impoſition of hands. Beſides, I have obſerved "already the dead *have been raiſed* and *have lived* many "years amongſt us." From this paſſage, then, thus cloſely tranſlated, obſerve, that when Irenæus ſpeaks of the caſting out dæmons, of the cures of diſeaſes, and of the

miracle, and the *only one* which I find (after having turned over their writings carefully, and with a view to this point)

viſions and other perſonal gifts of Chriſtians, his expreſſions denote actions of the preſent time, δαιμονας ελαυνουσι—ενυπνια ορωντας ιωνται, οπτασιας εχουσι—theſe then were the miraculous powers which he ſays ſtill ſubſiſted. But when he ſpeaks of raiſing the dead, he immediately changes his ſtile, and ſays νεκροι ηγερθησαν have been raiſed, not εγειρονται, which he would have uſed had he mentioned this power as ſtill ſubſiſting. If we turn to the Latin tranſlation preſerved in our copies of Irenæus, the ſame difference of expreſſion may be obſerved there, "Alii "enim dæmones *excludunt*, alii autem præſcientiam *habent* "futurorum, & viſiones—alii autem laborantes aliqua in- "firmitate *curant* & ſanos *reſtituunt*. Jam etiam, quem- "admodum, diximus, & mortui *reſurrexerunt*, & *perſeve-* "*raverunt* nobiſcum multis annis." Iren. L. 2. C. LVII. P. 218. From all this then, I think it is pretty evident, that the miracle of raiſing the dead is ſpoken of by Irenæus, only as what had been performed formerly. not as what continued in his time equally with the other inſtances, which according to him, were ſtill ſubſiſting in the church. Dr. Middleton in his poſthumous piece, P. 69, juſtly corrects Dr. Dodwell for giving a preſent ſenſe to ηγερθεντα. But unleſs he himſelf runs into the like miſtake, Irenæus's ſaying νεκροι ηγερθησαν cannot prove, that he ſpeaks of the dead being ſtill raiſed by Chriſtians in his own age.

they challenged their adverſaries to come and ſee them perform*.

* It may not be foreign to my argument to place before the reader ſome few of the many appeals made, by the Chriſtian writers of thoſe ages, to the ſtanding power of caſting out dæmons, by exorciſing them in the name of Jeſus. The firſt I ſhall mention is from *Juſtin Martyr.* Και νυν εκ των υπ'οψιν γινομενων μαθειν δυνασθε, δαιμονιοληπτους γαρ πολλους κατα παντα τον κοσμον, και εν τη ὑμετερα πολει, πολλοι των ἡμετερων ανθρωπων των Χριστιανων, εξορκιζοντες κατα του ονοματος Ιησου Χριστου του σταυρωθεντος επι Ποντιου Πιλατου, ὑπο των αλλων παντων εξορκιστων και επαστων και φαρμακευτων μη ιαθεντας, ιασαντο, και επι νυν ιωνται, καταργουντες και εκδιωκοντες τους κατεχοντας τους ανθρωπους δαιμονας. Juſtin Martyr, Cohortatio ad Græcos, P. 45. Two paſſages to the ſame purpoſe occur in Juſtin's dialogue with Trypho, P. 247 and 311.—*Tertullian* boaſts in the following manner; Edatur hic aliquis ſub tribunalibus veſtris, quem dæmone agi conſtet: Juſſus a quolibet chriſtiano loqui ſpiritus illus, tam ſe dæmonem confitebitur de vero, quam alibi deum de falſo: Æquè producatur aliquis ex iis qui de Deo pati exiſtimantur, qui aris inhalantes numen de nidore concipiunt, qui ructando curantur, qui anhelando præfantur. Iſta ipſa virgo cœleſtis pluviarum pollicitatrix, iſte ipſe Æſculapius medicinarum demonſtrator, aliàs de morituris ſcordii & denatii & aſclepiadoti ſubminiſtrator, niſi ſe dæmones confeſſi fuerint, chriſtiano mentiri non audentes, ibidem illius chriſtiani procaciſſimi ſanguinem fundite. Quid iſto opere manifeſtius, quid hac probatione fidelius? Simplicitas veritatis in medio eſt; virtus illi ſua aſſiſtit; nihil ſuſpicari licebit, magiâ aut

Now, not to mention that the ſame Fathers who aſcribe ſuch powers to

aliquâ fallacia fieri. Dictis non ſtetis, ſi occuli veſtri & aures permiſerint vobis.—Tertull. Apol. C. 13. See alſo, a ſimilar paſſage of the ſame author—Ad Scapulam, C. 2. P. 6.—*St. Cyprian* appeals to Demetrianus the Proconſul of Africa, with like confidence. O ſi audire eos velles & videre, quando a nobis adjurantur & torquentur ſpiritualibus flagris, & verborum tormentis de obſeſſis corporibus ejiciunter, quando ejulantes & gementes voce humana, & poteſtate divina flagella & verbera ſentientes, venturum judicium confitentur, veni & cognoſce vera eſſe quæ dicimus.—Cyp. ad Demet. S. 12. *Minucius Felix* triumphs to the ſame purpoſe. Hæc omnia ſciunt plerique, pars veſtrum, ipſos Dæmonas de ſemetipſis confiteri, quoties a nobis tormentis verborum & orationis incendiis de corporibus exiguntur. Ipſe Saturnus & Serapis & Jupiter & quicquid dæmonum colitis, victi dolore, quod ſunt eloquuntur ; nec utique in turpitudinem ſui, nonnullis præſertim veſtrûm aſſiſtentibus, mentiunter. Ipſis teſtibus eos eſſe Dæmonas, de ſe verum confitentibus credite ; adjurati enim per Deum verum & ſolum, inviti, miſeri corporibus inhorreſcunt, &, vel exiliunt ſtatim, vel evaneſcunt gradatim, prout fides patientis adjuvat, aut gratia curantis aſpirat.—M. Felix. P. 30.—*Julius Firmicus* agrees in the ſame deſcription ; Ecce Dæmon eſt quem colis, cum Dei & Chriſti ejus nomen audierit, contremeſcit, &, ut interrogantibus nobis reſpondeat trepdantia verba, vix ſe colligit ; adhærens homini laceratur, uritur, vapulat, & ſtatim de commiſſis ſceleribus confitetur.—De Errore profan. Relig.—*Lactantius* gives us the ſame account of the

Chriſtians, allow equally that they were

behaviour of the Dæmons which were diſpoſſeſſed in his time.—Quo audito, tremunt, exclamant, & uri ſe verberarique teſtantur; interrogati qui ſint, quando venerint, quando in hominem irrepſerint, confitentur ſic extorti, & excruciati; virtute divini numinis exulant; propter hæc verbera & minas, ſanctos & juſtos viros ſemper oderunt. Lact. de Juſtitia, Lib. v. C. 12.

But of all the works of the fathers of the ſecond and third age, *Origen*'s Defence of Chriſtianity againſt Celſus, both on account of the length of the performance, and of the nature of the argument there treated, is the moſt likely to give us a complete view of the nature of the miraculous powers, claimed by Chriſtians at that period. It will not be unneceſſary therefore, to quote here the principal paſſages of that work, where any mention is made of ſuch powers.—Origen tells us (P. 62. Ed. Sp.) that ever ſince the coming of Jeſus there were no prophets, nor miracles to be found among the Jews, whereas there were ſome footſteps of them, ſtill amongſt Chriſtians, which he had ſeen himſelf. Εϛιν ουν ιδειν μετα την Ιησου επιδημιαν, Ιουδαιους καταλελειμμενους—και μηδεν σημειον του ειναι τινα θειοτητα παρ'αυτοις. ουκ ετι γαρ προφηται, ουδε τερασια. ων καν ιχνη επι ποσον παρα χριϛιανοις ευρισκεται, και τινα γε μειζονα, και ει πιϛοι εσμεν λεγοντες, ἑωρακαμεν και ημεις. What then are the particular inſtances brought by Origen, in ſupport of this general aſſertion?—The following are all that I have been able to meet with. He mentions (p. 80.) that in his time cures were performed in the name of Jeſus; Γενναιον δ'εϛιν

exercised by Pagans, with the assistance

του Ιησου, το μεχρι σημερον θεραπευεσθαι τω ονοματι αυτου, ὃυς ὁ Θεος βουλεται. He affirms (p. 124.) that some Christians were able, by invoking the name of God and Jesus, to cure the sick; and that he himself had seen many freed, in this manner, from the severest diseases, such as madness and the like: τινες δε σημεια του ειληφεναι τι δια την πιστιν ταυτην παραδοξοτερον, επιδεικνυνται εν οἰς θεραπευουσιν, ουδεν αλλο καλουντες επι τους δεομενους θεραπειας, η τον επι πασι Θεον, και το του Ιησου ονομα μετα της περι αυτου ἱστοριας. τουτοις γαρ και ημεις ἑωρακαμεν πολλους απαλλαγεντας χαλεπων συμπτωματων, και εκστασεων και μανιων, και αλλων μυριων, ἁπερ ουτ' ανθρωποι ουτε δαιμονες ἐθεραπευσαν.—He tells us (p. 133.) that the Dæmons quitted the bodies they possessed, whenever adjured by the name of Jesus: δαιμονες τω ονοματι αυτου απαγγελλομενω μονον εικοντες αναχωρουν απο των ὑπ'αυτων πολεμουμενων.—In another place (p. 335.) he says that many Christians could cast out dæmons from the possessed, without any magical incantations, but merely by exorcising them with prayers; that even the most simple men could do this; and that this power was generally exercised by laymen: ὁποιον εστι και το των δαιμονων γενος, ὃυς ουκ ολιγοι χριστιανων απελαυνουσι των πασχοντων, συν ουδενι περιεργω και μαγικω η φαρμακευτικω πραγματι, αλλα μονη ευχη—και ὁσα αν δυναιτο προσαγειν απλουστερος ανθρωπος, ὡς επιπαν γαρ ἰδιωται το τοιουτον πραττουσι.——These then being the single instances produced by Origen, to corroborate his general assertion as to the continuance of miraculous powers in his time, this perfectly agrees with the representation which I have given of them, viz.—that they consisted

of their dæmons or Gods*, and admit that there were exorciſts among the

in the cures of diſeaſes, and particularly in the cures of perſons ſuppoſed to be poſſeſſed by ſome dæmon.

* Origen in his Treatiſe, which I have quoted ſo often, ſeems to allow (for argument's ſake at leaſt) the power of curing diſeaſes to Æſculapius, a dæmon ſkilled in phyſic; and of prophecying, to another dæmon, Apollo. Ινα δε και δω Ιατρικον τινα Δαιμονα θεραπευειν σωματα, τον καλουμενον Ασκληπιον· ειποιμ'αν προς τους θαυμαζοντας το τοιαυτο, η την Απολλωνος μαντειαν, &c. &c. P. 124. But if *Origen* does not come up to the point, *Athenagoras*, a father of the ſame age certainly does; for he mentions it as a matter about which Chriſtians were agreed, that in different places, cities, and countries, there were ſome extraordinary works performed in the name of idols. το μεν δη κατα τοπους, και πολεις, και εθνη γιγνεσθαι τινας επ'ονοματι ειδωλων ενεργειας, ουδ'ημεις αντιλεγομεν· ου μεν ει ωφεληθησαν τινες, και ου ελυπηθησαν ἑτεροι, θεους νομιουμεν τους εφ'ἑκατερα ενεργησαντες. Athenag. Legatio pro Chriſt. P. 25.

I ſhall only add, that it ſeems to appear unexceptionably, from the paſſages quoted in this and in the former note, that the Chriſtian writers of the ſecond and third ages, did not deny the exiſtence of the Jupiter, the Saturn, the Serapis, the Apollo, the Iris, the Æſculapius, and other objects of the Pagan worſhip, but only laboured to prove that they were not gods, but dæmons: In ſupport

Jews and *Gentiles*, who by the uſe of certain forms of words uſed as charms, and by the practice of certain rites, caſt out devils as well as the Chriſtian exorciſts*, not to mention this, I ſay which ſome may think puts theſe feats of jugglers and impoſtors, upon the ſame footing of credibility with the works aſcribed to Chriſtians) may it not be alleged, that the objections urged in the above treatiſe, againſt ſuch inſtances of a miraculous power in later ages, are applicable alſo to theſe?—May it not be alledged, that the cures aſcribed to the prayers of Chriſtians, to the impoſition of their hands, *&c.* in thoſe early times,

of which they urged the confeſſion of theſe dæmons themſelves, whom they ſuppoſed to poſſeſs men's bodies, and over whom the Chriſtian exorciſts had ſo commanding an influence.

* This appears indubitably from the following authorities. Juſtin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho, P. 311. Irenæus, L. II. C. v. P. 123, and Origen againſt Celſus, P. 17. P. 183—184. P. 262, which paſſages I avoid tranſcribing, for the ſake of brevity.

might, for aught we know, be really brought about in a natural way, and be accounted for in the ſame way, in which we have accounted for thoſe aſcribed to the *Abbé Paris*, and thoſe attributed by the ſuperſtitious Papiſts, to the interceſſion of their ſaints? And, particularly, ſince theſe primitive cures, are, as Dr. *Church* allows, related to us without any circumſtance attending them---how know we, whether the grounds for aſcribing them to a ſupernatural interpoſition, were ſuch as would bear examination, if we had the means of examination in our power?—With regard to the exorciſing of devils, the only miracle which the Chriſtian apologiſts challenge the Pagans to come and ſee them perform,—will it not be obvious to aſk, why, if this power was continued in the church as a proof of the truth of chriſtianity, powers alſo were not appealed to, leſs ambiguous in their nature, and other works performed, which admit of no ſolution from natural cauſes, and were incapable

of being the effects of fraud and collusion* ?

If any one, after weighing these objections, should still think the accounts of the miracles, mentioned by the fathers

* Gregory, usually surnamed Thaumaturgus, flourished about the middle of the third century, and many of the miracles ascribed to him are facts which can admit of no solution from natural causes. Will not this then prove that I have given a partial view of the miraculous powers of the second and third ages? I think not; and for this reason. Though Gregory flourished in the third century, *no cotemporary author* mentions any thing of the strange wonders which he is reported to have wrought; nor can they be traced higher than the time of St. Basil and St. Gregory of Nyssa, who were brothers, and both lived about a century after his death. They, therefore, are justly rejected as inventions of a later age, and can be believed by those only who can admit the miracles ascribed to Apollonius, or those reported, so long after his death, of Ignatius.—Gregory of Nyssa, according to Dr. Cave's character of him, Hist. Liter. P. 132, *was apt to be too credulous.* No wonder, therefore, he gave too much credit to old women's tales—as the Anecdotes of the Wonder-worker must be allowed to be, when related (as we learn from St. Basil, Epist. ad Neocæsar. 75. P. 131. T. 1.) by his aged grandmother Macrina.

of the ſecond and third age, to be *ſufficiently ſatisfactory and worthy of belief*, let him enjoy his opinion; but however, let him not blame thoſe who are more ſcrupulous in admitting a claim to miracles; and who, while they have the miracles recorded in the Goſpels confirmed to them, by ſo full, ſo clear, ſo commanding an evidence think themſelves at liberty to doubt of, nay to diſbelieve the miracles reported by the fathers on evidence far leſs ſatisfactory.

Thus much with regard to the miraculous powers of the ſecond and third centuries.—But if there ſhould be room for allowing (and I am far from denying this) that theſe ought in juſtice to be diſtinguiſhed from the more modern, and more ſuſpicious pretenſions of Popery, ſurely this favourable opinion cannot be extended, by any one who has examined the ſubject, to the claims of the fourth and fifth centuries. For though the wonders aſcribed to the heroes of

thoſe times be related in the moſt circumſtantial manner, and, in general, muſt, if they were true, be allowed to be ſupernatural, ſo that the defects obſervable in the accounts of the two former ages are not applicable to them; yet do they ſo exactly reſemble the boaſted wonders of the *Romiſh* Saints, that a Proteſtant who goes ſo low, will never be able to give a ſatisfactory reaſon why he will go no lower; why, while he admits the miracles of thoſe frantic enthuſiaſts of the fourth or fifth centuries, of a *Paul*, an *Anthony*, an *Hilarion*, a *Simeon Stylites*, he is not equally an advocate for the miracles of the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries, for St. *Nicholas Tolentine* and his chickens, and for another *Anthony* preaching to his fiſhes.

There ſeems leſs reaſon for my uſing of caution in giving my opinion as to the miracles of the fourth and fifth ages, both becauſe Dr. *Church* and Dr. *Dod-*

well, by confining their defence of the primitive miracles to thoſe of the three firſt ages, ſeem to give them up, which is alſo done by Mr. *Jackſon* and Mr. *Brooke* in their anſwers to the Free Inquiry) and becauſe even Mr. *Dodwell* the father, who has deduced the hiſtory of the primitive miracles to the eſtabliſhment of chriſtianity by human laws, ſhuts them up then; declaring that many things concurred to recommend the credit of the preceding ages, which have no place in thoſe that followed; and who ſpeaking of the life of *Gregory* called the wonder-worker, written by *Gregory* of *Nyſſa*, a biſhop of the greateſt piety and gravity, ſays, "in this life "there are many things, which breathe "the air of impoſture, and the genius "of the fourth century, ſo that I dare "not mix them with what is more ge-"nuine, for fear of hurting the credit "of all."*

* See Mr. Dodwell's Diſſ. Iren. as quoted by Dr. Middleton, Free Inquiry, P. 128, 129.

I ſhall only add, that if ever there were any accounts of miracles, which paſſed current without being examined into at their firſt publication, and which conſequently will not bear the teſt of the *third rule* which I laid down in this treatiſe, this may be affirmed of the miracles recorded by writers of the fourth and fifth ages; when Chriſtianity, now freed from the terrors of perſecution, and aided by the civil magiſtrate, began to be corrupted by its credulous, or ill deſigning profeſſors, and the foundation was laid of thoſe inventions, which have gathered like a ſnow-ball, in every ſucceeding age of ſuperſtitious ignorance, till at laſt the ſun-ſhine of the reformation began to melt the monſtrous heap. And if we think ourſelves warranted to pay no regard to the accounts of more modern miracles propagated in favour of image-worſhip, purgatory and tranſubſtantiation, the very ſame reaſons will lead us, if we be conſiſtent with ourſelves, to rank in the ſame claſs, the miracles of the

fourth and fifth age, propagated in favour of monkery, and of the worſhip of ſaints and reliques.

Though it may be a matter more of curioſity than of uſe, to endeavour to determine the exact time when miraculous powers were withdrawn from the church, yet I think that it may be determined with ſome degree of exactneſs. The various opinions of learned Proteſtants who have extended them at all after the Apoſtles, ſhew how much they have been at a loſs with regard to this; which has been urged by Papiſts with an air of triumph, as if Proteſtants not being able to agree when the age of miracles was cloſed, this were an argument of its not being cloſed as yet.—If there be any thing in this objection (though perhaps there is not) I think I have it in my power to obviate it, by fixing upon a period, beyond which we may be certain that miraculous powers did not ſubſiſt.

In order then to this, I muſt deſire you to recollect that I have endeavoured, under my laſt head in the above treatiſe, to ſhew, that what we know of the attributes of the Deity, and of the uſual methods of his government, incline us to believe, that miracles will never be performed by the agency and inſtrumentality of men, but when theſe men are ſet apart and choſen by God to be his embaſſadors, as it were, to the world, to deliver ſome meſſage, or to preach ſome doctrine as a law from Heaven; and in this caſe, their being veſted with a power of working miracles, is the beſt credential of the divinity of their miſſion.

If we ſet out with this as a principle—then ſhall we eaſily determine, when it was that miracles ceaſed to be performed by Chriſtians; for we ſhall be led to conclude that the age of Chriſtian miracles, muſt have ceaſed with the age of Chriſtian inſpiration. So long as

Heaven thought proper to ſet apart any particular ſet of men, to be the authorized preachers of the new religion revealed to mankind, ſo long, may we reſt ſatisfied, miraculous powers were continued. But whenever this purpoſe was anſwered, and *inſpiration* ceaſed to be any longer neceſſary, by the complete publication of the Goſpel, then would the miraculous powers, whoſe end was to prove the truth of inſpiration, be, of courſe, withdrawn.

I will not take upon me to ſay, that we can trace with any certainty, the exact year when Chriſtianity ceaſed to be preached by perſons really inſpired. *St. John*, we know, who ſurvived the reſt of the twelve Apoſtles, died very * near the cloſe of the firſt age. However, this we know likewiſe, from peruſing our New Teſtament, that the *twelve* were not the only inſpired preachers of

* In the year 99.

Chriſtianity; but that, beſides them, many other diſciples were veſted with the ſame character, and for this purpoſe enabled to perform ſuch works as might prove *that God was with them*. And it is far from being improbable, that ſome of them did ſurvive the laſt of the Apoſtles, and conſequently, that miraculous powers were not totally withdrawn, at the beginning of the ſecond century.

But if they were continued thus long, there is all the reaſon in the world to conclude, that they did entirely ceaſe ſoon after. This, at leaſt, is certain, that none of the venerable fathers, the ornaments and heads of the church in the ſecond or third age, whoſe works have come down to us, or whoſe names only are preſerved, ever pretended to put themſelves upon a footing with the inſpired publiſhers of the Goſpel, or aſſumed the character of teachers from Heaven. The Goſpel revelation was

cloſed with the Apoſtles and with the apoſtolical aſſiſtants; and antiquity is unanimous in aſſuring us of this fact, that in the very age immediately connected with that of the apoſtles, their works were diſtinguiſhed from any other writings of Chriſtians, and univerſally eſteemed as the oracles of truth, as the ſtandard of Chriſtian faith and practice. A moſt convincing proof that no future inſpiration was claimed; or, if claimed, was allowed of.

From what has been offered, then, under this head, we may eaſily infer, that Dr. *Middleton* might have denied that miraculous powers were continued in the church after the apoſtolical age, and yet have done no diſſervice to Chriſtianity; nor have furniſhed us with any grounds for calling his faith as a Chriſtian, in queſtion. And if his *Free Inquiry* has had both theſe conſequences, this has ariſen from his manner of ſupporting his opinion, not from the real ten-

dency of the opinion itſelf.—He has juſtly provoked the indignation of every ſerious Chriſtian, by the indecent contempt with which he treats the earlieſt fathers of the Church, whoſe names have been venerable in every age, and whoſe labours in defence of Chriſtianity, for the truth of which moſt of them laid down their lives, ought to have ſecured them from inſult, if they could not procure his eſteem. And if there be any ſuperſtitious conceits, or weak prejudices to be met with in their works, a veil ought to have been thrown over them, as theſe are faults not of their own, but of the times in which they lived; and which, if they diſgrace the pages of the fathers of the Chriſtian Church, detract equally from the merit of their cotemporaries, the philoſophers of the *Platonic* and *Pythagorian* ſchools.

But this is only a ſecondary reaſon for the offence taken by Chriſtians at the *Free Inquiry* of Dr. *Middleton*. Charity forbids

us to put the worſt conſtruction on the intentions of any one living, but it would be more ungenerous to treat thus one who is now no more.—And, yet, I think that Dr. *Middleton*, if he meant to reject *only* the miracles ſince the Apoſtolical age, while he admitted thoſe of *Jeſus*, which every Chriſtian muſt admit, took the moſt obvious ſteps to create a ſuſpicion that his book was levelled equally at both. One thing is certain, that gentlemen of your perſuaſion, have been furniſhed with weapons againſt Chriſtianity, from his magazine. For while he labours ſo ſtrenuouſly to overturn the credibility of all miraculous powers ſince the Apoſtles, he leaves his readers to draw their conſequences, nay encourages them to extend his arguments as they pleaſe. And many, it is notorious, have extended them to thoſe miracles recorded by *St. Matthew*, or *St. Luke*, while thoſe mentioned by *Irenæus*, or *Juſtin Martyr*, are the only ones expreſsly aimed at.—Dr. *Middleton*, we will ſuppoſe, was not aware of this, when

his *Inquiry* was firſt publiſhed. But after he was aware of it, after he had ſeen that the manner in which he treated his argument, not the argument itſelf, had done ſo much harm to the religion he profeſſed, it then became his duty, it was expected, it was neceſſary, in order to his convincing the world that he had no other deſign beſides that which he avowed, that he ſhould give the antidote as he had adminiſtered the poiſon; by pointing out the ſuperiorty of the evidence by which the miracles recorded in the New Teſtament are ſupported, and by ſhewing that the reaſons aſſigned for rejecting the miracles of the fathers are not applicable (as I have proved they are not) to the miracles of the Evangeliſts.

Had he done this—far from looking upon him as a betrayer of his cauſe, I ſhould rather have compared him to a wiſe and prudent general, who abandons

outworks the maintaining of which would lay him open to the inſults of the enemy, and retires behind baſtions, againſt which all their attacks will be ineffectual.—In word, had Dr. *Middleton* done this, he would have done real ſervice to the cauſe of Chriſtianity, by removing a fund of cavilling, and a ſource of objections which have been furniſhed to the ſcoffer, by ſome injudicious defenders of the Chriſtian religion, who have blended its evidences with connections equally ſuſpicious as they are foreign, and by aiming to prove more than was neceſſary, have brought into doubt what, otherwiſe, would have been thought ſufficiently proved.

But as this was not attempted by Dr. *Middleton* (and it were to be wiſhed that we could diſcover in his ſubſequent writings that he had any inclination to attempt it*) the learned and worthy perſons,

* His Treatiſe on Prophecy: a work where we have

who undertook to confute the *Free Inquiry*, ſhould have made this the principal view

more of invective than of argument, and which will be a laſting proof that no dignity of character, or ſuperiority of abilities, can ſecure one from the attacks of envious ſpleen and diſappointed ambition: and his poſthumous vindication of the Free Inquiry, in which from P. 5. to P. 11, he ſeems rather to ſtrengthen than to confute the charge, which had been brought againſt him, of having dropt hints of his allowing of no revelation beſides that " which God has made of himſelf from the beginning, " and placed continually before our eyes in the wonderful " works and beautiful fabric of this viſible world."

Pref. to Free Inquiry, P. 18.

And yet after all; as I ſhould be very ſorry to give up, to the enemies of Chriſtianity, a writer of Dr. Middleton's abilities (not to mention any thing of his profeſſion) it is with a degree of pleaſure that I meet with the following declaration of his ſentiments, in his introductory diſcourſe. " As far as miracles can evince the divinity " of a religion, the pretenſions of Chriſtianity are con- " firmed by the evidence of ſuch, as of all others on record, " are the leaſt liable to exception, and carry the cleareſt " marks of their ſincerity; being wrought by Chriſt and " his Apoſtles, for an end ſo great, ſo important, and ſo " univerſally beneficial, as to be highly worthy of the " interpoſition of the Deity; and wrought by the miniſtry " of mean and ſimple men, in the open view of the people, " as the teſtimonial of that divine miſſion, to which

of their anſwers.—Inſtead of making the cauſe of the fathers, as it were, the cauſe

" they pretended ; and delivered to us by eye-witneſſes, " whoſe honeſt characters exclude ſuſpicion of fraud, and " whoſe knowledge of the facts, which they related, " ſcarce admits the probability of a miſtake. This is the " genuine ground on which Chriſtianity reſts." P. 94. Dr. Middleton expreſſes himſelf ſtill more ſtrongly in the prefatory diſcourſe to his Letter from Rome. " That my " ſentiments therefore (ſays he) on this head may " neither be miſtaken, nor ſuſpected ; and that I may give " ſatisfaction, as far as I am able, to all, whom, by any " freedom of expreſſion, I may poſſibly have offended, " either in this, or in any other of my writings, I take " this occaſion to declare ; that I look upon miracles, " when accompanied with all the circumſtances, proper " to perſuade us of the reality of the facts, ſaid to be per- " formed, and of the dignity of the end, for which they " were performed, to be the moſt deciſive proofs, that can " be given, of the truth and divinity of any religion. " This was evidently the caſe of the Jewiſh and of the " Chriſtian miracles ; wrought in ſuch a manner, as could " leave no doubt upon the ſenſes of thoſe, who were the " witneſſes of them ; and for the nobleſt end, for which " the Deity can be conceived to interpoſe himſelf ; the " univerſal good and ſalvation of man."—And again. " The innumerable forgeries of this ſort, which have been " impoſed upon mankind in all ages, are ſo far from " weakening the credibility of the Jewiſh and Chriſtian " miracles, that they ſtrengthen it. For how could we

of Chriſtianity (which was the very thing the enemies of Chriſtianity could wiſh)

" account for a practice ſo univerſal, of forging miracles " for the ſupport of falſe religions, if on ſome occaſions " they had not actually been wrought, for the confirmation " of a true one? Or how is it poſſible, that ſo many ſpu- " rious copies ſhould paſs upon the world, without ſome " genuine original, from whence they were drawn; whoſe " known exiſtence and tried ſucceſs might give an ap- " pearance of probability to the counterfeit?" P. 84—87. Whether Dr. Middleton has not in many of his works, from the famous letter to Dr. Waterland, down to the poſthumous vindication of his Free Inquiry, dropt hints, nay even defended arguments, which cannot well be reconciled with the above declaration of his ſentiments, may perhaps admit of a debate. However, as every one would inſiſt upon it as a matter of mere juſtice, that his clear and poſitive declarations ſhould be the rule of determining the real meaning and tendency of his more ambiguous expreſſions; for this reaſon, I think that Dr. Middleton cannot be claimed by writers on the ſide of infidelity, and that we have not ſufficient grounds, notwithſtanding the many ſuſpicious circumſtances in his works, to repreſent him as a diſbeliever of the miracles on which Chriſtianity is built.—The liberty I have taken, I think juſtly, in ſeveral places of this treatiſe, to paſs cenſures on Dr. Middleton, muſt ſatisfy every one, that nothing but a regard to truth could have drawn from me the attempt, in the preſent note, to clear his character from an imputation, which however cannot be called a malicious one,

their anſwers would have done more effectual ſervice to their religion, had they begun where *Middleton* ended, had they ſupplied what he omitted; in ſhort, had they joined iſſue with him as to the miracles which he rejected, and which they themſelves look upon as of no conſequence to the cauſe of the Goſpel, and ſhewn that this would not affect the credibility of thoſe miracles on the truth of which the Goſpel undoubtedly, is founded.

Had this been done, *your* cavils as to the want of a *criterion* to diſtinguiſh true from falſe miracles, would have been obviated, and this taſk, which I have now performed been, in a great meaſure, unneceſſary. A taſk, I own, which I ſhould never have undertaken, had not the importance of the ſubject made me

as he has written with a *freedom of expreſſion* in ſome of his works, according to his own confeſſion, which left room to his antagoniſts to miſtake or ſuſpect his real ſentiments.

forget my inability to do it juſtice, and the ſilence of others better able to defend Chriſtianity, ſecured this weak attempt of mine, from a charge of preſumption. And, if, after all that I have offered, you ſtill continue unconvinced, you muſt impute to the unſkilfulneſs of the champion, what certainly ought not to be imputed to the weakneſs of his cauſe. My weapons were good if I could have uſed them effectually.

But though I may have failed in my attempt to convince *you*, my labour has, at leaſt, been crowned with this happy effect:—it has ſtrengthened *my* own faith. For by being obliged to conſider, with more attention than, perhaps, I had done before, the nature of your objections, their inſufficiency has appeared in a ſtronger light: And the cloſeſt ſcrutiny and moſt impartial examination of the evidences which ſupport thoſe miracles, on the credibility of which the truth of the Revelation in the New Teſtament is

built, have ſerved only to ſatisfy me that Chriſtianity is founded *upon a rock*, and that every attempt to ſap its foundations tends to diſcover their ſtrength the more.---This conviction, a conviction not the effect of blind prejudice, but the reſult of honeſt enquiry, has filled my mind with a ſatisfaction, that can be felt by thoſe alone who are ſincere believers of a religion, which every one would wiſh to be true, who would wiſh to attain to that glorious immortality, *which it has brought to light* and promiſed to mankind.

I am, &c.

THE END.

W. Flint, Printer, Old Bailey.

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